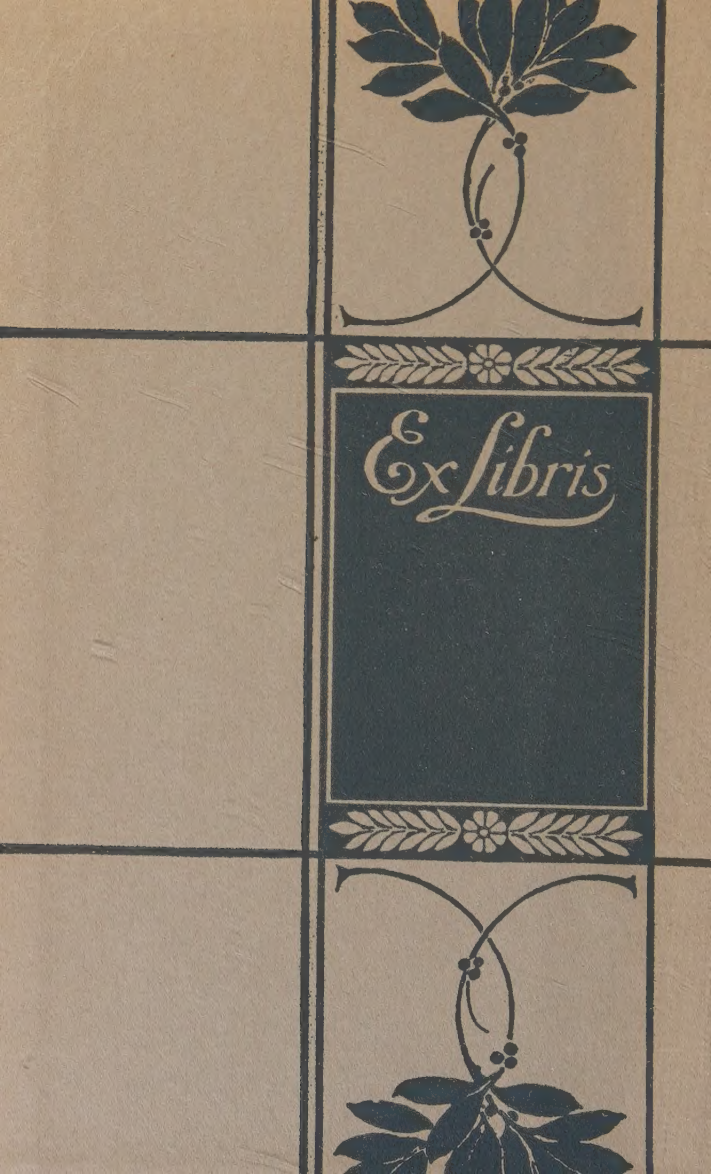
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# New Pocket Classics

*New Pocket Classics*

# The Deserted Village and Other Poems

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain.

# THE DESERTED VILLAGE
## AND OTHER POEMS

Oliver
Goldsmith

Edited by R. N. Whiteford
Revised by H. Y. Moffett
Illustrated by James Scott

The Macmillan Company

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Where health and plenty cheer'd the
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# PREFACE

THIS little volume contains the best poems of Goldsmith. In addition to "The Deserted Village" and "The Traveller," which show his poetic genius, there are included a number of minor poems that exhibit the various sides of his poetic talent.

Goldsmith is best revealed to us by the medium of that charming personality which everywhere pervades his writings; and, since his poetry is the best expression of his character, in the Notes many personal sidelights have been focused on the selected poems. I have endeavored to stress the annotation with appreciation as well as with information; I hope that students will always keep the beauty of Goldsmith's verse, its substance and form, its rhythm and metre, in the foreground, and that they will ever keep in the background such comments as are at variance with any true method of interpreting poetry.

I have drawn material from the annotations of my predecessors—editors such as Prior, Mitford, Hales, Rolfe, Tupper, and Austin Dobson. Whenever I have had occasion to use their gleanings, I have given them full acknowledgment.

R. N. W.

# INTRODUCTION

From the moment when Goldsmith appears before us as a dancing urchin with pouting, pock-marked face, into which we wish more of his mind had been thrown, we are moved to say, as we look at his "penitential phiz," that here is a youth who, because of the quality of no harm within, will be imposed upon by the sharpers of this harsh world. In writing his life we tenderly lift up the tangled threads which were unfeelingly spun out by fate, appreciating how, all through life, a mind never at rest continually encouraged itself by the words, "No person ever had a better knack at hoping than I." At Lissoy, his father did not put the marrow of saving into his bones, so that the boy who knew not how to get a farthing always threw away the guinea. Like Steele he early became a "machine of pity." Smallpox had marred his face and disposition, so that few felt the warmth of the smouldering fires of genius within that thickset, drolly-shaped body and head; and like Steele he early lost a father, and by his pranks eventually tired out even his poor mother's patience and love. Without his Uncle Contarine and his brother Henry, his life at the outset would have been completely ruined. It seems that moving, traveling, shifting from one place to another was his lot during the first period of his existence. He went from Paddy Byrne to Mr. Campbell and then to Rev. Patrick Hughes. Lissoy, Elphin, Athlone,

Edgeworthstown, in quick succession polished up him, whom everybody termed a blockhead, for Trinity College, Dublin, where he entered June 11, 1744; and here fate assumed a more malignant form.

At this time Pope had just died, and Swift, who years before had been graduated by special favor from Trinity, was with ruined reason seeking an exit from a world which should no longer lacerate his broken heart.

The ungainly, ugly boy went up as sizar, feeling poverty doubly in not getting what his brother Henry had received from his father; but he had grit, far more than that possessed by Johnson, who had not lasted it out at Oxford. There were studies toward which he was inclined; and Wilder his master, mathematics, and fagging, he tried to forget by the fast life of the town. He now aided in a college riot, and having gained an "exhibition" prize of thirty shillings he celebrated the same by giving in No. 35 a dancing party to both sexes. Wilder broke in and knocked down Goldsmith, who, smarting under this disgrace, straightway started for Cork with a view of going to America, and was saved from starvation in his meanderings by some peas in the hand of a peasant girl. All this had occurred hard upon his father's death. A short time later, through his brother Henry's intercession, he again attended the University, only to suffer from more disagreeable experiences. Borrowing became necessary; ballads were written and sold; and his charity course began by his sleeping in a mattress so that a poor woman could have his blankets.

In 1749, the year in which Johnson gave to London his "Vanity of Human Wishes," Gold-

smith received his degree and left a place whereto he never warmly advised any man to send his son. He was now on the point of taking orders, but had to give up the prospect of becoming a parson—in all probability because of the fault of boyish dress—and tutored for a time at Roscommon, where his Uncle Contarine lived. Tiring of this drudgery, he set out on horseback for Cork and engaged passage for America; but as the vessel sailed without him, he was compelled to return to Ballymahon on a broken-down horse, termed by him Fiddleback. After this he started to London to take up the study of law, but on his way was fleeced of his guineas at Dublin, and returned once more to mortified relatives. One more chance of redemption was given by his Uncle Contarine, who was willing to have him go to Edinburgh to take up the study of medicine. So, in the autumn of 1752, in the streets of "Auld Reekie," absent-minded Goldsmith luckily met the porter who was able to direct him to his new lodgings.

In Edinburgh he dissipated his time and again gave way to the romantic turn of his family, informing his uncle that Paris and Leyden had far better facilities for the study of medicine than Scotland could furnish. After being relieved from debt, he embarked on a vessel, which, before it reached Bordeaux, went down with all on board; but fate watched over Goldsmith with paternal care, for he had disembarked at New-Castle-upon-Tyne and ultimately reached Leyden, in Holland. Here he seems to have studied medicine, after his fashion, for about two years. But we are not at all surprised to see him, in February, 1755, fluting his way from Louvain, where he is said to have obtained his medical degree, to Antwerp and

Paris, and disputing from Genoa to Florence, Venice, and Padua, until, on February 1, 1756, he landed at Dover with his proverbial ever-empty purse, which was carried at once to the streets in which Butler and Otway had starved in the previous age. He was now twenty-seven years of age and his prospects were anything but brilliant. Possibly, at this time, according to his prose account of the wanderings of George Primrose and his essay on the "Adventures of a Strolling Player," Goldsmith may have tried acting or helped as a merry-Andrew in puppet-shows. He must have known the Otway life and somewhat of the beggars of Axe-Lane. The street and the garret are ever present between the lines of letters written home at this period. Fish Street Hill lent to him the position of mixing drugs for an apothecary, and his old college friend, Dr. Sleigh, helped on quackery by setting him up as physician in Bankside, Southwark. What few fees were gained he spent on gaudy dress, an extravagance to which he was prone for the remainder of his days.

About 1756 Goldsmith luckily became acquainted with the great novelist Samuel Richardson, who employed him to correct proof. It seems probable that it was while he was engaged in this work that his thoughts first turned to literature as a profession, for at this time he presented for criticism to an Edinburgh friend a drama, which fortunately has not come down to us. Next he served for a time as usher in a school at Peckham, where he met the publisher Griffiths, who engaged him as a hack-writer for *The Monthly Review*. But as time moved on, Paternoster Row and Salisbury Square garret proved very unsatisfactory to him who wished to be something more than a reviewer

or critic. He cordially hated a critic. In *The Citizen of the World* he says a critic is not a man of taste more than "the Chinese who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails." An author, a creator, he desired to be, not a poor Grub-street apprentice whose style must be directed by a Griffiths. It was now, in 1758, that his first book, a translation of Marteilhe's "Memoirs of a Protestant," was published.

But a translation cannot contain the originality of a genius. Ever moving, dissatisfied Goldsmith was now back at Peckham, writing to his cousin Con and to his friends in Ireland that an original production was to be forthcoming. Trying to make ends meet, in 1758 he enthusiastically tried to secure a surgeon's service on the coast of Coromandel in East India, but presumably failed on the examination; and for revenge on the world for the low estimate placed on his knowledge he worked away in secret on that prose writing which shows a promise of those graces of what we may call his perfectly happy-at-home style. With his hack-money Goldsmith had crept up Breakneck Stairs to Green Arbor Court, from which he wrote to his brother Henry a letter in which is his second bit of poetry, "An Author's Bed-Chamber." About this time Percy visited him as he was correcting proof of a piece which, as has been said, bears all the marks of genius. In April, 1759, in the year in which Burns was born, and Collins died in madness at Chichester, and Johnson was defraying his mother's funeral expenses by writing "Rasselas," was published an "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe."

Goldsmith had now written his first lines which can be called poetry and the first original prose

piece, which is chiefly valuable because of its showing his view of current English poetry and drama. In it he attacked blank verse, claiming that the poetry of his age was not equal to it, since only "the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing"; that it existed only in tuneless flow, and that the poetry of 1759 was a collection of pompous epithets, labored diction, and deviations from common sense, which tided an author to success for a month and then to oblivion forever. Straining at grace and catching at finery is his caustic opinion of the inflated, trifling style of English poetry; and his view of the stage afterward cost him dear with Garrick. He now continued with his hack-work which improved greatly in quality of entertaining subjects such as were contributed to *The Bee*. One should by all means read the paper "On Dress" for humor, and "A City Night-Piece" for pathos, while he should not forget the article on the "Fame Machine," wherein he sees Samuel Johnson with his *Dictionary* and *The Rambler*. This tribute no doubt caused Johnson to feel that a new star had arisen in the firmament of English authors. If the reader has leisure to stray farther, he should read the article on "The Sagacity of Some Insects," and that on "The Augustan Age," in which Goldsmith bemoans the low standard of poetic requirements which seemed only to applaud "dryly didactive," volatile, jingling nonsense or the rasping of blank verse.

Goldsmith again tried poetry, producing such effusions as the original quatrains on Wolfe, "Logicians Refuted," "To Iris," and the "Elegy on Mrs. Blaize," which, with the exception of the last-named piece, termed by some critics a classic, scarcely deserve mention unless it be to show the

many sides of his talent and also the fact that he is sometimes guilty of much poetry that he would have his age avoid. The poetic plant flowered late, and few could have seen in these affected imitations any promise of the greatness that was to come. However, the readers of *The Bee* and *The Busy Body* must have been attracted by their raciness, and certainly Percy was. Goldsmith's prose had now attracted Smollett, who had just started the *British Magazine*, and Newbery, the editor of the daily *Public Ledger;* to the former publication he contributed the fine "Reverie at the Boar's Head Tavern" and "The Distresses of the Poor," and to the latter his famous "Chinese Letters."

The year 1760 had now come, and with it a removal to No. 6, Wine Office Court, where soon, on May 31, 1761, he was honored by a first visit from Johnson who, as he rolled himself along, when asked by his friend Percy why he had so dressed himself up, replied that he had determined to set Goldy an example, since he no longer wished to be quoted as a pattern for slovenliness in garb. We look in vain for the bur which had the faculty of sticking to his coat-tails. Would that it had been present, but the jealous Scotchman, Boswell, was not to meet Goldsmith until early in 1763.

In May, 1762, was published *The Citizen of the World*, in which are portrayed two great characters, the Man in Black and Beau Tibbs. Today the letters of Lien Chi Altangi are as delightful reading as when they turned the eyes of literary London toward an obscure author between 1760 and 1762. Nobody knows Goldsmith or his times who has omitted in his reading these Chinese letters in which are the low morals of the Londoners, funerals, a visit to the Poet's Corner in

Westminster Abbey, and an understanding of English marriages. One goes to the theatre, understands benevolence, charity, pathos, and humor; he studies quacks, old maids, literature clubs, a white mouse with green eyes, current criticism, and Goldsmith's self revealed in the Man in Black, and in Beau Tibbs with whom he dines and with whom he goes to Vauxhall. The reader further peruses articles on dogs and poor poets and old age, and takes a second visit to Westminster Abbey, understanding how Irving not only used material from Addison, but also largely from Goldsmith; finally, on closing the one hundred and twenty-three letters, he knows the condition of poetry in those degenerate days. Goldsmith laughingly averred that the race of poets was extinct by reason of their catching Pegasus by the tail, thus directing his movements otherwise than by his mouth. Vapid rhymes made poetry. English poets possessed little knowledge of how to regulate their numbers or to make them capable of infinite modulation, so as to vary with passions that strike and catch the heart. He held out the preceding age as a model in order that trite sentiments might not be strung up in rhyme. He poked fun at elegies, monodies, and pastorals, which were watered with an onion, and in forced lucubration Goldsmith actually composed an elegy to prove how poetic dullness in his time could pare itself on both sides and leave nothing in the middle but still deeper stupidity; and his "Epigram," addressed to Colman, Lloyd, and Churchill, shows how he valued puppet-moving lines pulled into rhyme and metre at a fool's will.

It is no wonder that Johnson in 1763 regarded Goldsmith as one of the chief authors of England.

As Jeffrey wrote to Macaulay, so must Johnson have said to Goldsmith, "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." From now on, everything that he touches he adorns.

Goldsmith had now moved to Islington to begin his *Vicar of Wakefield* and work out his first great poem, "The Traveller"; and so what he had written in Switzerland for his brother Henry he showed to Johnson, with whom he was now in high favor, on the Monday evenings spent at the *Literary Club,* which was organized about this time, in 1764. Johnson saw the merit of the descriptions, moralized it, theorized it, and carefully reviewed it after publication, and said it did not spring into favor because of the partiality of friends, but in spite of such, since his friends had always militated against anything good coming from Goldy. The poem enjoyed immediate success, and Goldsmith was recognized as a poet of the first rank, at the age of thirty-six. When "The Traveller" was published, Thomson, Blair, Dyer, Allan Ramsay, Collins, and Shenstone were dead, and Churchill had just been buried; Young was rapidly nearing the end, and no notable poet was living but Gray. The condition of English poetry was as it had been in 1761, when Churchill's "Rosciad" had momentarily checked the romanticism which had been set in motion by Dyer's "Grongar Hill," by Thomson's "Seasons," by Young's *Night-Thoughts,* by the odes of Akenside and Collins, and by Gray's "Elegy." After a survey of the verse of his contemporaries, Goldsmith had come to the conclusion that changing passions, and numbers changing with those passions, revealed the whole secret by which the monotonous flow,

the bloated epithet, and "the dressing up trifles with dignity," could be removed from heroic couplets. He says, "Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally; not hunt after lofty expressions to deliver mean ideas." Above all, he desired his fellow-poets to avoid the blank verse of innovators, who "not only use blank verse in tragedy and the epic, but even in lyric poetry." But while he admired the old school, he was not blind to the merits of the new. As far back as 1757 he had sneered at the Pindaric attempts of Gray, suggesting that the poet of the "Elegy" should cultivate flowers indigenous, not exotic, to English soil; but he at the same time had seen in these alien pieces the excellence of Dryden's odes. He had memorized some of Gray's "Elegy"; he had recently set his approval on the fine sentiment in the blank verse of Thomson's didactive failure, "Liberty," which seems to have inspired the apostrophe to freedom in "The Traveller"; and in "Threnodia Augustalis," which he was yet to write, he purloined from Collins at sweet discretion. The reader can feel that Goldsmith's views of poetry had changed or were changing as he runs across this passage in *Essay XVIII:* "There is an ode extant without rhyme addressed to Evening, by the late Mr. Collins, much more beautiful; and Mr. Warton, with some others, has succeeded in divers occasional pieces, that are free of this restraint: but the number in all of these depends upon the syllables, and not upon the feet, which are unlimited." Thus we can understand how Goldsmith in his "Traveller" married the body of classicism to the soul of romanticism; and how, as he said of Otway, he painted classicism in this poem directly from nature, catching emotion just as it rises from

the soul in all the powers of the moving and pathetic. A few of his great phrases selected here and there from the poem show the variety of his peculiar emotional power, which makes him unique among his contemporaries, and which still sets him apart from all other English poets.

"My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee . . ."

"My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own."

"Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall
To see the hoard of human bliss so small . . ."

"The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine . . ."

"Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast."

"And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast . . ."

"And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore."

". . . at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling, long-frequented village fall."

These lines are enough to make even a Goldsmith worshiper re-read "The Traveller," however he may have it at his tongue's end.

At this time Goldsmith came back from Islington to his lodging in the Temple and published his "Essays," 1765. The pieces especially to be commended are the "Adventures of a Strolling Player," "Sentimental Comedy," and those on the tech-

nique of poetry, ancient and modern. It was in the year of his *Essays* that he buttoned his scarlet greatcoat under his chin, wore his fancy wig, and carried his cane to patients, who were in constant danger of being killed by his prescriptions; but, as dress and debt went hand in hand, he soon gave up ruining his dupes and friends by this renewal of quackery.

He now published on March 27, 1766, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* which will always be considered his greatest performance in prose. By it he measured arms not only with the dead Richardson and Fielding, but also with the living Sterne and Smollett. In it he created a character which is a composite of Chaucer's priest, Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley, Fielding's Parson Adams, and Sterne's Uncle Toby. Dr. Primrose is an allegorical personage like Job. The novel is a tale of adversity ending in prosperity, the hero of which is like Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, being portrayed to set off the good individual in life for whom the snares are set. The Vicar is a passive actor on the arena of a destiny that shifts its own scenery, and he is to be admired only in the way in which he takes woe and weal with equal grace and thanks. Goldsmith helped in the evolution of English fiction by writing an idyllic romance which gives us two characteristics, optimism and nature, making for righteouness in a life which, even at its worst, was beautiful and worth the living. The plot, as Macaulay says, is an impossible one, but we only care to note that it well sustains the study of a fascinating personality, that it is "an imperishable tale of the misfortunes of that compound of wisdom and simplicity, of vanity and unselfishness, of shrewdness and benevolence—the Vicar of Wakefield," and that in this

respect it is not autobiographical, but universal. It is not necessary to speak of the subordinate characters who meted out the seeming evils. They whose names are familiar in every cultured household are but foils to set off the virtues of him who by "an habitual acquaintance with misery" went through "the truest school of fortitude and philosophy." And even the ethical phrases bend in proper support to this clear conception of the character of the Vicar.

"... the nakedness of the indigent world might be clothed from the trimmings of the vain."

"That virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarce worth the sentinel."

"... never strike an unnecessary blow at a victim, over whom Providence holds the scourge of its resentment."

"Conscience is a coward; and those faults it has not strength enough to prevent, it seldom has justice enough to accuse."

"... that single effort by which we stop short in the downhill path to perdition is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice."

"Good counsel rejected, returns to enrich the giver's bosom."

Johnson had been the first to see the merits of this novel, and by selling it for sixty guineas had tided Goldsmith over a crisis in his financial affairs. It seems, though the exact circumstances of Goldsmith's arrangements with Collins, the publisher, will never be known, that the various editions of the novel in his lifetime brought nothing but loss to all concerned. In passing we must not forget that his ballad, "The Hermit," of 1765,

was inserted in the novel, as well as "When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly," and the "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog," which he had written during some of his leisure moments.

During 1767 Goldsmith was at Islington, probably at Canonbury House, and when in the city, at Garden Court. He had now finished *The Good-Natured Man,* which was staged by Colman at Covent Garden on January 29, 1768. By the proceeds of this comedy he extravagantly fitted up his rooms at No. 2, Brick Court, Middle Temple, for had he not, according to Boswell, in Garden Court said to Johnson, "I shall soon be in better chambers"? We only wish he had paid more attention to Johnson's reply, "Nil te quaesiveris extra," for this new outlay was the beginning of permanent unhappiness. A mind that ever works under the incubus of pecuniary distress will derange itself; and we can readily see how, by the card parties and dinners given at this time, he increased that nervousness of a mind constituted never to be at rest. His vanity had ever required a heyday fling of folly, no matter what it cost in the long run. One day, possibly during his hours of revelry, there came to his apartments the news of his brother's death at Athlone. Should old acquaintance and Lissoy be forgot and never brought to mind? Had he not in the Dedication of "The Traveller" expressed the wish that the quiet obscurity of Henry's happy life had been his? At any rate, it was in May, 1768, that he began that tenderest and best poem, which is redolent of his boyhood joys and sorrows and precious memories of kith and kin. Oppressed by his improvident condition and depressed by his lonely life, since all of his relatives were either dead or scattered,

he turned for solace to the making of this new poem in "Shoemaker's Paradise," the little cottage at Edgeware, where he also worked on his *Roman History*. In 1769 he was conspicuous at Boswell's famous dinner; and it was during this year that he was elected Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy, and began a natural history, which made good Johnson's prediction that it would be as agreeable as a Persian tale, when it subsequently appeared as *Animated Nature*.

May 26, 1770, is the great date in Goldsmith's life, for it gave to the world "The Deserted Village," a poem the beauty of which is almost beyond analysis. It is a pastoral lyric that possesses in its finest lines no artifice but the genuine emotion which beats into rhythm the pleasure of beholding the joys of peasantry, the pathos of seeing these joys pass into sorrows, and the indignation which is hot against a government that has made laws to grind the poor and elevate the rich. Goldsmith's lines are at times as virulent and bitter in protest against the social evils of his day as those of Milton and Shelley when they called down fire from heaven on blind mouths, sons of Belial, herded wolves, obscene ravens, and vultures "Who feed where desolation first has fed." On the other hand, there is only one poet with whom we can compare him in power of tender pathos, and that is Cowper who, as memory brings up a little child of six and a funeral procession filing away from nursery windows, sobs anew for his mother who had been taken from him in the long ago. All the agony of sixty years is in this couplet:

> "By expectation every day beguiled,
> Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child."

If we can sum up Cowper's life in this felicitous phrase, so likewise can we Goldsmith's when we turn to that part of "The Deserted Village" where the agony of eighteen years is expressed in hoping that at some time he might return to die amid the scenes of his childhood. We feel that he is choking down the tears in that plaintive refrain, "I still had hopes," which makes the passage not only the very quintessence of lyricism, but also the finest he ever wrote.

> "In all my wanderings round this world of care,
> In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
> I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
> Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
> To husband out life's taper at the close,
> And keep the flame from wasting by repose;
> I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—
> Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
> Around my fire an evening group to draw,
> And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
> And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue
> Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
> I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
> Here to return—and die at home at last."

The description of the village; the portraits of the parson and the schoolmaster; the inn; the comparison of England to a female, whose charms are fled, shining forth in all the impotence of dress; his sympathetic penciling of innocence, "Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn," becoming a "poor houseless shivering" wretch, where "Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square"; and his lofty idea of the function of poetry, sweet poetry, that loveliest maid—make us ask where is there another poem comparable to this one in exquisitely chiseled imagery, in unforgettable

phrases, in elegance of diction, and in softness of numbers. We reluctantly leave a poem which is so arrayed in nature's simplest charms as to stir the fountains of those early, deep remembrances that turn all our past to pain. The emotional technique of the whole poem is explained by this couplet:

> "To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
> One native charm, than all the gloss of art."

Goldsmith after publishing his "Deserted Village" visited Paris with Mrs. Horneck and her two daughters. On coming back, after a visit with Lord Clare in 1771, he wrote his airy "Haunch of Venison," which is full of raillery and sallies of innuendo.

From this minor poem Goldsmith turned to his *History of England,* and in the farm-house at Edgeware Road, where he was to have summer outings until his death, he continued writing his compilations. In February, 1772, his dirge, "Threnodia Augustalis," was written, of which hasty composition it is not necessary to speak further. Students of Goldsmith's poetry, however, should not omit the prose verse letter written at this time to "Little Comedy," who had become the wife of Bunbury, the caricaturist. Like "The Haunch of Venison," its anapestic rhymes are full of delightful repartee and bantering. Prior first brought it to light in 1837. The sixth milestone on Edgeware Road also helped to bring out on March 15, 1773, *She Stoops to Conquer,* which ranks Goldsmith with Sheridan. At this time he was still drawing animals on the walls for *Animated Nature,* and he was working on his *History of Greece.*

These compilations can be pardoned the padding of inaccuracies because of the witchery of their style.

Goldsmith was now hopelessly in debt, writing in order to get advance money and with no expectation of ever settling old scores. Was a poet ever trusted before to the extent of two thousand pounds? As De Quincey says, there comes a time in every man's life when his past rushes in upon his present and seeks to annihilate it. Dress, gaming, and unthinking charity had done him to the death, and he was now grappling with the phantoms of these, his own mistakes, which had made the path of fate so tortuous. Brooding had increased his nervous malady to a mild form of insanity, which was far preferable to what lay near in the shadowy shape of Fleet Street Prison. His friends could not aid him. Their invitations to dinners and coffee-houses only helped him to forget. They even went so far as to write epitaphs on one who for years had been burying himself alive by being, as Johnson said, no man's friend, since he had never been a friend to himself. If Johnson was of this opinion, what must his other companions have thought of his down-hill career at this time? I have often thought the reason why Johnson did not write an epitaph on Goldsmith in St. James's coffee-house was because he felt that soon he would be compelled to write one in grim earnest, and he had not long to wait. On April 4, 1774, two weeks before his unfinished "Retaliation," with its fine anapestic epitaphs on Burke, Garrick, and Reynolds, was published, the ghosts of his mistakes—and mistakes are as tragic oft as sins—called him to a world where he did not have to meet his creditors. Said Johnson, who knew him

thoroughly and whose judgment few will be disposed to question: "Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man."

Goldsmith's debts kept him from having a public funeral and from Westminster Abbey; and they pursued him even into the Temple burying-ground, making his obsequies as dismal as those of Poe. No man knows the exact spot of his interment, but everyone knows where to go to read "Nullum ferè scribendi genus non tetegit; nullum quod tetegit non ornavit," and after reading the epitaph that Johnson composed for him, we think of what the same great critic said: "He deserved a place in Westminster Abbey, and every year he lived would have deserved it better."

# THE DESERTED VILLAGE

# THE DESERTED VILLAGE

## Dedication

### to sir joshua reynolds

Dear Sir,

I can have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this Poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to enquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that

the depopulation it deplores is no where to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and enquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an enquiry whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on

the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN°! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting° summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paus'd on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church° that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush,° with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train,° from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;

While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
The dancing pair° that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,

How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play.

And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,°
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:°
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade°;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry,° their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs° began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd: trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.°
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green—
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.°

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view°
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings° round this world of care,
In all my griefs°—and GOD has given my share—
I still had hopes,° my latest hours to crown,

Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as an hare, whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,°
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.°

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly°!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter° stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,

While resignation° gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose:
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind°—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale° had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate° in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,

Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green.

To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian° of the pensive plain!

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's° modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year°.
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change his place;
Unpractis'd he to fawn,° or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain:
The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier,° kindly bade to stay,

Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe:
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave° ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.°

Beside the bed° where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,

And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff° that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master° taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;

Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge:
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
For even though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame; the very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.

Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
Where greybeard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.

And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place:
The white-wash'd wall,° the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules,° the royal game of goose;°
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,°
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains; this wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride

Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:°
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd;
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
But, verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,

The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
To pamper luxury and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There, the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,°
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.

Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female° lies:
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all—her friends, her virtue fled—
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn,—thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread.

Ah, no! To distant climes,° a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama° murmurs to their woe.

Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore:
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers° wait their hapless prey,
And savage men, more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day°
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,

Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep!
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!

Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,°
Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe;
Till, sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down, they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done°;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes plac'd above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit, in these degenerate times° of shame,
To catch the heart,° or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds,° my solitary pride;

Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first,° and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's° cliffs, or Pambamarca's° side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach° erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole° away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

# THE TRAVELLER

## Dedication

### TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH

Dear Sir,

I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it, when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great, and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying

away. But of all kinds of ambition—what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party—that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, painting and music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favour once shown to her, and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in greater danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous—I mean party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger,

that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader, who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet; his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to show, that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge better than yourself how far these positions are illustrated in this Poem.

I am, dear Sir,
Your most affectionate brother,
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

## THE TRAVELLER

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,°
Or by the lazy Scheldt,° or wandering Po;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian° boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;
Or where Campania's plain° forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies:
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother turns,° with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.°

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend:
Blest be that spot, where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their ev'ning fire;
Blest that abode, where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair;
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,°
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,°
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good,° that mocks me with the view;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,°
And find no spot of all the world my own.

E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And, plac'd on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where a hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd;

Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flow'ry vale;
For me your tributary stores combine;
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine!

As some lone miser visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still:
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleas'd with each good that heaven to man supplies:
Yet oft a sigh prevails,° and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd,
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.

But where to find that happiest spot below,
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease.
The naked negro, panting at the line,°
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine.

Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings even.

Nature, a mother kind° alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labour's earnest call;
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side°;
And, though the rocky crested summits frown,
These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.
From art° more various are the blessings sent:
Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest.
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,°
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.
Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the favourite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends;

Till, carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies:
Here, for a while, my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub° at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends;
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene.

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest:
Whatever fruits in different climes are found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives that blossom but to die;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand,
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign:
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And even in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind,
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs; not far remov'd the date,
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;
At her command the palace learn'd to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies;
The canvas glow'd beyond even nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form:
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd, of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave:
And late the nation found, with fruitless skill,
Its former strength was but plethoric° ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;

From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade°;
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd,
The sports of children satisfy the child°;
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:
As in those domes where Cæsars° once bore sway,
Defac'd by time and tottering in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them! turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display,
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.
No product here the barren hills° afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword;

No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May;
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,°
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet still, even here, content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,
To make him loathe his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
Cheerful, at morn, he wakes from short repose,
Breasts° the keen air, and carols as he goes;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep,
Or drives his venturous ploughshare to the steep;
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage into day.
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire,° and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;

While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board;
And haply, too, some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

Thus every good his native wilds impart,
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And even those ills, that round his mansion rise,
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assign'd;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd.
Yet let them only share the praises due,
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies,
That first excites desire, and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,

Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow:
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low:
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, the manners run;
And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest;
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispers'd, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain.
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,

With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire°!
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And, freshen'd from the wave, the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch faltering still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill;
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages: dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze;
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic° lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore.

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display,
Thus idly busy rolls their world away:
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temper here:
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or even imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current; paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land;
From courts, to camps, to cottages it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise:
They please, are pleas'd, they give to get esteem,
Till seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise;
For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought:
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year:
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's° artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow,
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore;
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,

The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,
A new creation rescued from his reign

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits° in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much lov'd wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear;
Even liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys.
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires of old!
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow;
How much unlike the sons of Britain now!

Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,

And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspes° glide.
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,
Extremes are only in the master's mind!
Stern o'er each bosom° Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagin'd right, above control,—
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here,
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear;
Too blest, indeed, were such without alloy;
But foster'd even by Freedom ills annoy:
That independence Britons prize too high,

Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie;
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown;
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd;
Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,
Repress ambition struggles round her shore;
Till, over-wrought, the general system feels
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As Nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown;
Till time may come, when, stript of all her charms,
The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die.

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great°:
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire!

And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt, or favour's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure,
I only would repress them to secure:
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil;
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach,
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.

O, then, how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms:
But when contending chiefs° blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own;
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free;
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor,° and rich men rule the law;
The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,

Pillag'd from slaves to purchase slaves at home;
Fear, pity, justice, indignation, start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart;
Till, half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, Brother, curse with me that baleful hour,
When first ambition struck at regal power;
And thus, polluting honour in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste?
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose,
In barren, solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen, at pleasure's lordly call,
The smiling, long frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
Forc'd from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main;
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways,

Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful,° and too faint to go,
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathise with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind:
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find:
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonising wheel,
Luke's iron crown,° and Damiens' bed of steel,°
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.

## THE HERMIT°

"Turn, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale,
With hospitable ray.

"For here, forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning as I go."

"Forbear, my son," the hermit cries,
"To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

"Here, to the houseless child of want,
My door is open still;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

"Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate'er my cell bestows;
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

"No flocks, that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them:

"But from the mountain's grassy side,
A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring.

"Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego;
All earth-born cares are wrong:
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."

Soft as the dew from heaven descends,
His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in the wilderness obscure,
The lonely mansion lay;
A refuge to the neighb'ring poor,
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Requir'd a master's care;
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Receiv'd the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheered his pensive guest:

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily press'd and smiled,
And, skilled in legendary lore,
The lingering hours beguiled.

Around, in sympathetic mirth,
Its tricks the kitten tries,
The cricket chirrups on the hearth,
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart,
To soothe the stranger's woe;
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising cares the hermit spied,
With answering care opprest:
"And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
"The sorrows of thy breast?

"From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove?
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love?

"Alas! the joys that fortune brings
Are trifling, and decay;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

"And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep:
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep?

"And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair one's jest;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

"For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex!" he said:
But, while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betray'd.

Surpris'd, he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view,
Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms:
The lovely stranger stands confest,
A maid in all her charms.

And, "Ah! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn," she cried,
"Whose feet unhallow'd thus intrude,
Where heaven and you reside.

"But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way.

"My father lived beside the Tyne;
A wealthy lord was he;
And all his wealth was mark'd as mine,
He had but only me.

"To win me from his tender arms,
Unnumber'd suitors came,
Who prais'd me for imputed charms,
And felt or feign'd a flame.

"Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove:
Among the rest young Edwin bow'd,
But never talk'd of love.

"In humble, simplest habit clad,
No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me.

"The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

"The dew, the blossom on the tree,
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me!
Their constancy was mine.

"For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain;
And while his passion touch'd my heart,
I triumph'd in his pain.

"Till, quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

"But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay—

"And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I."

"Forbid it, heaven!" the hermit cried,
And clasp'd her to his breast:
The wondering fair one turn'd to chide,—
'Twas Edwin's self that prest!

"Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restor'd to love and thee!

"Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign:
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that's mine?

"No, never from this hour to part
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too."

# SONGS AND STANZAS

## WHEN LOVELY WOMAN STOOPS TO FOLLY°

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds, too late, that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

## AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short,—
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington° there was a man,
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,—
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes:
The naked every day he clad,—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighb'ring streets
The wond'ring neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied:
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

## AN ELEGY ON THAT GLORY OF HER SEX, MRS. MARY BLAIZE

GOOD people all, with one accord,
Lament for Madam Blaize,
Who never wanted a good word—
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom pass'd her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor—
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighbourhood to please,
With manners wondrous winning;
And never follow'd wicked ways—
Unless when she was sinning.

At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumber'd in her pew—
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux and more;
The king himself has follow'd her—
When she has walk'd before.

But now, her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all;
The doctors found, when she was dead—
Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament, in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street° well may say,
That had she lived a twelvemonth more—
She had not died to-day.

## EPITAPH ON DR. PARNELL

THIS tomb, inscribed to gentle PARNELL'S° name,
May speak our gratitude, but not his fame.
What heart but feels his sweetly moral lay,
That leads to truth through pleasure's flowery way?
Celestial themes confess'd his tuneful aid;
And Heaven, that lent him genius, was repaid.
Needless to him the tribute we bestow,
The transitory breath of fame below:
More lasting rapture from his works shall rise,
While converts thank their poet in the skies.

## STANZAS ON THE TAKING OF QUEBEC

AMIDST the clamour of exulting joys,
Which triumph forces from the patriot heart,
Grief dares to mingle her soul-piercing voice,
And quells the raptures which from pleasure start.

O Wolfe°! to thee a streaming flood of woe,
Sighing, we pay, and think e'en conquest dear;

Quebec in vain shall teach our breast to glow,
Whilst thy sad fate extorts the heart-wrung tear.

Alive, the foe thy dreadful vigour fled,
And saw thee fall with joy-pronouncing eyes;
Yet they shall know thou conquerest, though dead!
Since from thy tomb a thousand heroes rise.

## THE WRETCH CONDEMNED WITH LIFE TO PART°

THE wretch condemn'd with life to part,
Still, still on hope relies;
And ev'ry pang, that rends the heart,
Bids expectation rise.

Hope, like the glimm'ring taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

## O MEMORY! THOU FOND DECEIVER°

O MEMORY! thou fond deceiver,
Still importunate and vain,
To former joys recurring ever,
And turning all the past to pain.

Thou, like the world, th' opprest oppressing,
  Thy smiles increase the wretch's woe;
And he who wants each other blessing,
  In thee must ever find a foe.

## RETALIATION

Of old, when Scarron° his companions invited,
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united;
If our landlord° supplies us with beef and with fish,
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish:
Our Dean° shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;
Our Burke° shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;
Our Will° shall be wild-fowl, of excellent flavour,
And Dick° with his pepper shall heighten the savour,
Our Cumberland's° sweetbread its place shall obtain;
And Douglas° is pudding, substantial and plain;
Our Garrick's° a salad, for in him we see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree;
To make out the dinner, full certain I am,
That Ridge° is anchovy, and Reynolds° is lamb;

That Hickey's° a capon; and, by the same rule,
Magnanimous Goldsmith a gooseberry fool.
At a dinner so various, at such a repast,
Who'd not be a glutton, and stick to the last?
Here, waiter, more wine! let me sit while I'm able,
Till all my companions sink under the table;
Then, with chaos and blunders encircling my head,
Let me ponder, and tell what I think of the dead.

Here lies the good Dean, re-united to earth,
Who mix'd reason with pleasure, and wisdom with mirth:
If he had any faults, he has left us in doubt—
At least, in six weeks, I could not find 'em out;
Yet some have declar'd, and it can't be denied 'em,
That sly-boots was cursedly cunning to hide 'em.

Here lies our good Edmund,° whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind:
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,

To persuade Tommy Townshend° to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining:
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit;
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot, too cool; for a drudge, disobedient;
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.
In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Here lies honest William,° whose heart was a mint,
While the owner ne'er knew half the good that was in't;
The pupil of impulse, it forc'd him along,
His conduct still right, with his argument wrong;
Still aiming at honour, yet fearing to roam,
The coachman was tipsy, the chariot drove home.
Would you ask for his merits? alas! he had none;
What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his own.

Here lies honest Richard,° whose fate I must sigh at;
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!
What spirits were his! what wit and what whim!
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb°!
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball;
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
That we wished him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;
But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
The Terence° of England, the mender of hearts;
A flattering painter, who made it his care
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,
And Comedy wonders at being so fine;
Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,
Or rather like Tragedy giving a rout.
His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud;
And coxcombs, alike in their failings alone,

Adopting his portraits, are pleased with their own.
Say, where has our poet this malady caught?
Or wherefore his characters thus without fault?
Say, was it that vainly directing his view
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?

Here Douglas retires from his toils, to relax,
The scourge of imposters, the terror of quacks:
Come all ye quack bards, and ye quacking divines,
Come and dance on the spot where your tyrant reclines!
When satire and censure encircled his throne,
I fear'd for your safety—I fear'd for my own;
But now he is gone, and we want a detector,
Our Dodds° shall be pious, our Kenricks° shall lecture;
Macpherson° write bombast, and call it a style;
Our Townshend make speeches, and I shall compile:
New Lauders and Bowers° the Tweed shall cross over,
No countryman living their tricks to discover;
Detection her taper shall quench to a spark,
And Scotchman meet Scotchman, and cheat in the dark.

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can,
An abridgement of all that was pleasant in man;
As an actor,° confess'd without rival to shine;
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a-day:
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick:
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame;
Till his relish, grown callous almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys,° and Woodfalls° so grave,

What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you raised,
While he was be-Roscius'd,° and you were be-praised!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel and mix with the skies:
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will;
Old Shakespeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens° be his Kellys above.

Here Hickey reclines, a most blunt, pleasant creature,
And slander itself must allow him good nature;
He cherish'd his friend, and he relish'd a bumper;
Yet one fault he had, and that one was a thumper.
Perhaps you may ask if the man was a miser?
I answer, No, no; for he always was wiser.
Too courteous, perhaps, or obligingly flat?
His very worst foe can't accuse him of that.
Perhaps he confided in men as they go,
And so was too foolishly honest? Ah, no!
Then what was his failing? come tell it, and burn ye!
He was—could he help it?—a special attorney!

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind;
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart.
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing:
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios,° and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.°

# NOTES

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

THIS idyllic pastoral, after receiving two years of careful revision, was published May 26, 1770. The metre used by Pope and Johnson in Goldsmith's hands is made to sustain fine descriptions of nature, excellence in character-portrayal, and warmth of an emotion which is genuine. The classic form is almost a concealed quantity, except in the polish of diction and in the rhyme that is for the most part forgotten; and its romantic pathos and ideal beauty will always remain the despair of posterity to reproduce. Pope or Johnson would have wrecked the theme by their mechanics, and no poet of the Romantic Period, with the exception of Cowper, ever grafted such a blossoming branch on the stump of classicism.

If one throws aside Goldsmith's economic theories and didacticism, the pastoral remains the most genuinely charming masterpiece among all the English lyrics. The poet is sensitive to pain and melancholy in all his lines by reason of a heart still broken by the remembrance of the loss of a brother he loved so well.

It is no wonder that Gray, after reading the poem, said, "This man is a poet;" and that Burke exclaimed, "What true and pretty pastoral images! They beat all—Pope, and Phillips, and Spenser too. . . ."

Johnson's "London" was Goldsmith's model for form and metre, but in the great originality of "The Deserted Village" it is scarcely traceable.

LINE 1. **Auburn.** "It is generally believed that by 'Auburn' he intended to designate his native village, Lissoy, in Ireland, and that Gen. Robert Napier was the depopulator of this unfortunate parish. Lissoy is about seven Irish miles distant from Athlone; Pallas is a small estate about ten miles from Lissoy. . . . He (Napier) en-

closed a domain of nine miles in circumference, in which were included three respectable families . . . with all their tenants and dependants. Upon the general's death his house was robbed by the indignant peasants, and all his woods cut down."—MITFORD, Pickering, 1839.

**4. parting:** departing. Cf. l. 170. The same use occurs twice in Gray's "Elegy."

**12. The decent church.** According to Dr. Strean, curate of Kilkenny West in 1807, the scenery depicted here is an exact reproduction of that near Lissoy. Scott, however, is inclined to think most of it fanciful.

**13. The hawthorn bush.** Compare Burns's imagery in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," 80-81:

> ". . . a youthful, loving, modest pair
> In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
> Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale!"

**17. the village train.** Cf. Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night," 5-7:

> "To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
> The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
> The native feelings strong, the guileless ways . . ."

**25. The dancing pair.** Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro*, 95-96:—

> "To many a youth and many a maid
> Dancing in the checkered shade . . ."

The present-day pupil, familiar with the recent craze for "marathon dancing," will readily understand the reference. Also, "the swain mistrustless of his smutted face" will suggest a characteristic schoolboy trick. The whole passage, 20-30, is a reminiscence of imagery in "L'Allegro" and in "The Traveller," ll. 250–254.

**51. Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey.** This line seems to have been made harsh in sound to fit the sense.

**52. men decay.** The poet is thinking of a decline in population, not of the moral deterioration of individuals.

**53. Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,** etc. Cf. Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night," 165:

"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings . . ."

Burns was indebted to "The Deserted Village," 51-68, for much of his imagery used in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Goldsmith, in his turn, was indebted to Johnson's "London," 1738, for the central idea of lines 51-68.

> "This mournful truth is ev'rywhere confess'd,
> *Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd;*
> But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold,
> Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold;
> Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implor'd,
> The groom retails the favours of his lord."

**55. a bold peasantry.** Goldsmith in *The Vicar of Wakefield* had already quoted Pope's "An honest man's the noblest work of God," and in the same place in the novel had said, "The ignorant peasant without fault is greater than the philosopher with many."

**57. England's griefs.** Note the skilful transfer of his affection and allegiance from Ireland to England, in patriotic defence of which Goldsmith ever uplifted pen in poetry and prose.

**68. And every pang that folly pays to pride.** Cf. *The Citizen of the World:* ". . . misery is artificial, and generally proceeds from our folly."

**74. And rural mirth and manners are no more.** Note the alliteration which is prominent everywhere in the poem. However, it is not used so artificially or frequently as in "The Traveller," where it seems to be quite overdone.

**79. return to view.** Goldsmith, after 1752, never did return to view the landscape of Westmeath. In a letter written to his brother-in-law, Hodson, on December 27, 1757, he had expressed a similar pathos: "This it is that gives me all the pangs I feel in separation. . . . If I go to the opera, where Signora Columba pours out all the mazes of melody, I sit and sigh for Lissoy fireside, and Johnny Armstrong's last good night from Peggy Golden. If I climb Flanstead Hill, than where nature never exhibited a more magnificent prospect, I confess it fine, but then I had rather be placed on the Little Mount before

Lissoy gate, and there take in, to me, the most pleasing horizon in nature."

**83. In all my wanderings.** What line in "The Traveller" is exactly similiar in sentiment?

**84. In all my griefs.** He is probably referring to his harrowing experiences as a hack-writer when pushing ahead for recognition in London from 1756–1759. To his brother, Henry, in 1759, he had written: "Take my present follies as instances of regard. Poetry is a much easier and more agreeable species of composition than prose; and could a man live by it, it were no unpleasant employment to be a poet."

**85. I still had hopes.** We are reminded of his phrase in *The Vicar of Wakefield:* "No person ever had a better knack at hoping than I." There is a humorous pathos in the little touch of personal vanity here confessed by the poet. Many passages in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* indicate how great must have been Goldsmith's envy of Johnson's ability to charm a circle of hearers by his conversation, an ability which poor Goldsmith was far from possessing.

**94. Pants to the place from whence at first she flew.** Wordsworth makes use of this same idea in "Hart-Leap Well," where the stag runs for thirteen hours to die on the spot of its birth:

> "In April here beneath the flowering thorn
> He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
> And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
> Not half a furlong from that self-same spring."

**96. and die at home at last.** Goldsmith had written in *The Citizen of the World:* "There is something so seducing in that spot in which we first had existence that nothing but it can please. Whatever vicissitudes we experience in life, however we toil, or wheresoever we wander, our fatigued wishes still recur to home for tranquillity; we long to die in that spot which gave us birth, and in that pleasing expectation find an opiate for every calamity."

And Irving expresses the same thought at the close of his "Stratford-on-Avon": "He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly

favor, will find, after all, there is no love, no admiration, no applause, so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace and honor among his kindred and his early friends. And when the weary heart and failing head begin to warn him that the evening of life is drawing on, he turns as fondly as does the infant to the mother's arms, to sink to sleep in the bosom of the scene of his childhood."

Was Goldsmith merely indulging in fabricated or fatuous sentiment when he wrote these finest lines of all his poetry —lines that are filled with the infinite longing which he had ever tugging at his heartstrings through all that ill-fated life of his?

**102. learns to fly.** Mitford calls attention to these lines in *The Bee:* "By struggling with misfortunes we are sure to receive some wound in the conflict; the only method to come off victorious is by running away."

**105. surly porter.** "I never see a nobleman's door half opened, that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach."—*The Citizen of the World.*

**110. resignation.** "Sir Joshua Reynolds painted a particularly fine picture of Resignation, and dedicated the print taken from it to Dr. Goldsmith, with some lines under it quoted from the 'Deserted Village.' This seems to have been done by Sir Joshua as a return of the compliment to Goldsmith, who had dedicated the poem to him."—Northcote's *Life of Reynolds.*

**122. the vacant mind:** the mind unburdened by care.

**124. the nightingale.** Has Goldsmith used any of the imagery employed by Milton, Collins, and Gray, in describing an evening? See "Il Penseroso," "Ode to Evening," and "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

**126. fluctuate.** This is a word as odious to the ear as "*verdant*," so constantly used in Pope's lines. Goldsmith seemed to think it admirable and quotes in *Essay XVI.* these lines from Armstrong:

> "Oh! when the growling winds contend, and all
> The sounding forest *fluctuates* in the storm . . ."

**136. The sad historian.** The "wretched matron" is not an imaginary character. We all remember Goody Blake and the leech-gatherer in the poetry of Wordsworth.

**140. The village preacher.** Doubtless Goldsmith had in mind the character-attributes of his father, and perhaps, too, of brother Henry, when he created a being second only to Chaucer's parish priest.

**142. forty pounds a year.** See Dedication of "The Traveller," l. 12. [Referring to Henry Goldsmith.]

**145. Unpractis'd he to fawn.** ". . . the man who can thank himself alone for the happiness he enjoys is truly blest; and lovely, far more lovely, the sturdy gloom of laborious indigence than the fawning simper of thriving adulation."—*The Citizen of the World*, C.

**155. The broken soldier.** See Letter CXIX., in *The Citizen of the World*, which tells of the distresses of a disabled soldier, and ends with this characteristic aphorism, "an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy."

**162. His pity gave.** In *The Citizen of the World* read Letter XXVI., where the Man in Black first gave his sympathy and then his all to the sailor and to the woman who, in rags, with a child in her arms and another on her back, was singing ballads with peculiar pathos. This shows how often Goldsmith's purse was emptied, not only in Ireland, but also in England; it shows that his whole life was lived according to the charity and hospitality advocated in his prose and poetry, for Dr. Primrose, the Man in Black, and the preacher, are one shadow, namely that cast by his own good-natured, tender-hearted, generous self.

**170. led the way.** Cf. Chaucer's "Prologue:"

> "But Cristes lore, and his Apostles twelve
> He taughte, but first he folwed it himselve."

**171–176. Beside the bed. . . .** The charming "Ballad of Father Gilligan" by William Butler Yeats will supply an interesting comparison here.

**189. As some tall cliff.** This grand simile conveys the curate's position in the material and moral world of

Auburn. It is accurate in description of mountain scenery, and shows that in spite of his age, which hampered any admiration for such, Goldsmith sincerely loved Nature in wrath and wildness. This description had been anticipated in touches of romanticism by Young in his "Night Thoughts:"

> "As some tall tower, or lofty mountain's brow
> Detains the sun, illustrious from its heights,
> While rising vapors and descending shades,
> With damps and darkness drown the spacious vale,
> Philander thus augustly rears his head."

A similar figure is employed in Arnold's fine sonnet on Shakespeare.

**196. The village master.** The teacher of Goldsmith was Thomas Byrne. Goldsmith's preacher and teacher form types as excellent in their portrayal as those which can be selected from Chaucer's "Prologue."

**227. The white-wash'd wall.** Cf. Goldsmith's "Description of an Author's Bed-chamber":

> "A window, patched with paper, lent a ray
> That dimly showed the state in which he lay;
> The sanded floor, that grits beneath the tread,
> The humid wall, with paltry pictures spread;
> The royal game of goose was there in view,
> And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew.
> The seasons, framed with listing, found a place,
> And brave Prince William show'd his lamp-black face;
> The morn was cold,—he views with keen desire
> The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire.
> With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
> And five crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney board."

The above lines slightly altered were originally composed in a letter written to his brother, Henry, in 1759, and were afterward enlarged upon and inserted in *The Citizen of the World,* Letter XXX. He was perhaps describing his dingy room in Green Arbor Court.

**232. The twelve good rules.** Hales in his *Longer English Poems* states that these rules were: 1. Urge no healths. 2. Profane no divine ordinances. 3. Touch no state matters. 4. Reveal no secrets. 5. Pick no quarrels. 6. Make no companions. 7. Maintain no ill opinion. 8. Keep no bad com-

pany. 9. Encourage no vice. 10. Make no long meals. 11. Repeat no grievances. 12. Lay no wagers.

**232. the royal game of goose.** Rolfe refers us to Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, IV., 2 (XXV.): "It is played upon a board with sixty-two compartments, and is called the game of goose because at every fourth and fifth compartment in succession a goose was depicted; and if the cast thrown by the player falls upon a goose, he moves forward double the number of his throw."

**269. Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore.** Cf. Thomson's *Liberty:*

> "How puffed with power and gorged with wealth
> A nation be; let trade enormous rise,
> Let East and South their mingled treasure pour,
> Till, swell'd impetuous, the corrupting flood
> Burst o'er the city and devour the land."

Thus we see that the poet, Thomson, in 1734, anticipated Goldsmith, who believed that trade made England a splendid but an unhappy land, since by it the poor were made to pay higher prices for the simple necessaries of life. Those who had amassed wealth through trade, in order to gratify luxurious tastes, desired to enlarge their estates by seizing the domains of the small landholders. And by being forced to give up their small farms, the country folk were compelled to emigrate; therefore, England was being fast depopulated.

**294. In all the glaring impotence of dress:** Read *The Bee*, II., "On Dress." The observations made by Cousin Hannah to Cousin Jeffrey are very amusing as well as instructive. They are in the Park and she says: "There goes Mrs. Roundabout—I mean the fat lady in the lute-string trollopee. Between you and I, she is but a cutler's wife. See how she's dressed, as fine as hands and pins can make her, while her two marriageable daughters, like bunters in stuff gowns, are now taking six penny worth of tea at the White Conduit House. Odious puss! how she waddles along, with her train two yards behind her! She puts me in mind of my Lord Bantam's Indian sheep, which are obliged to have their monstrous tails trundled

along in a gocart. For all her airs, it goes to her husband's heart to see four yards of good lute-string wearing against the ground, like one of his knives on a grindstone."

**321. Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square.** This is a very finely phrased line that recalls Johnson's "London:"

"But hark! th' affrighted crowd's tumultuous cries
Roll through the streets, and thunder to the skies. . . .

* * * * * * *

Lords of the street, and terrors of the way,
Flush'd as they are, with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach."

**326. the poor houseless shivering female.** The reader should by all means read "The City Night-Piece" in *The Bee*, IV. to understand how Goldsmith used its material in padding out 326–336.

"Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief.

"Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility? or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse?"

Goldsmith in 326–336 anticipates Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night, 82–90, and "To a Mountain Daisy," 31–36, and Hood's "The Bridge of Sighs."

**341. To distant climes.** Goldsmith apparently felt that the lot of the emigrants to North America was dismal indeed.

**344. Altama:** The Altamaha, a river in Georgia.

**355. Where crouching tigers.** Goldsmith places tigers not only in Georgia and Canada, but also in England. Cf. *The Citizen of the World*, Letter CVI.: ". . . and the very tigers start from the forest with sympathetic concern."

**363–384.** This passage depicts a scene somewhat like that of the departure of the Acadians from their homes, as described by Longfellow in "Evangeline."

**389. to sickly greatness grown.** Cf. "The Traveller," note on 144.

**396. business of destruction done.** Cf. *The Citizen of the World*, Letter XXV.: ". . . colonies, by draining away the brave and enterprising, leave the country in the hands of the timid and avaricious."

According to Goldsmith the villagers take with them six virtues, and leave behind the seven deadly sins; and they, who are termed refuse by the rich, are composed of "the laborious and enterprising—of such men as can be serviceable to their country at home—of men who ought to be regarded as the sinews of the people, and cherished with every degree of political indulgence."

**409. in these degenerate times.** Four years before the publication of this poem, Goldsmith had written in *The Vicar of Wakefield:* "English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection—a string of epithets that improve the sound without carrying on the sense."

**410. To catch the heart.** This is just what Goldsmith's poetry does, and precisely what that of his contemporaries does not. In *The Citizen of the World* he writes: "In a word, the great faults of the modern professed English poets are, that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart."

**412. My shame in crowds.** We all know from Boswell concerning Goldsmith's inability to shine in conversation at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho. It was Johnson who said of him, "That no man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had."

**414. That found'st me poor at first.** In a letter written to his brother-in-law, December 27, 1757, he says, "In short, by a very little practice as a physician, and a very little reputation as a poet, I make a shift to live. Nothing is more apt to introduce us to the gates of the muses than poverty. . . . Thus, upon hearing I write, no

doubt you imagine I starve; and the name of an author naturally reminds you of a garret."

418. **Torno:** Lake Tornea in north Sweden.

418. **Pambamarca:** a mountain near Quito, Ecuador.

424. **Teach.** Note the didactic element in Goldsmith's poetry. Does it detract from its merits?

428. **labour'd mole:** a mole is a massive work of masonry constructed in the ocean to serve as a breakwater. *Labor'd* means *built with great expenditure of labor.*

## THE TRAVELLER; OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

THIS excellent bit of modified classicism was published December 19, 1764. Goldsmith was indebted for his material to Addison's "Letter from Italy," 1701, and Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes," 1749, with occasional gleanings and aids from Thomson and Collins. As soon as it was published, Johnson in a review pronounced its technique so satisfactory that it only remained to discover whether Goldsmith was a just estimator of comparative happiness; and, after proving this, he tersely remarked that not since Pope had there been anything equal to this masterpiece. Miss Reynolds observed, "I never more shall think Dr. Goldsmith ugly," and her brother said, "I was glad to hear Charles Fox say it was one of the finest poems in the English language," which remark caused Ursa Major to growl out, "The merit of 'The Traveller' is so well established that Mr. Fox's praise cannot augment it, nor his censure diminish it." Nor has it lost caste through all these years, since all sincere critics join with Macaulay in saying: "The execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophic poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust,

that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our minds."

**1. slow.** "Chamier once asked him what he meant by 'slow,' the last word in the first line of 'The Traveller.' . . . Did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered, 'Yes.' I was sitting by, and said, 'No, sir; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude.' Chamier believed then that I had written the line as much as if he had seen me write it."—Johnson, BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson*. The whole line foreshadows the tender pathos pervading the poem.

**2. Scheldt:** The Scheldt is a river between Holland and Belgium.

**3. Carinthian.** Carinthia is a province in the western part of Austria.

**5. Campania's plain:** the Campagna of Rome.

**9. to my brother turns.** "I have met with no disappointment with respect to my East India voyage, nor are my resolutions altered; though, at the same time, I must confess it gives me some pain to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's sickness since I saw you, yet I am not that strong, active man you once knew me. You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study, have worn me down. If I remember right, you are seven or eight years older than me, yet I dare venture to say, if a stranger saw us both, he would pay me the honours of seniority. Imagine to yourself a pale, melancholy visage with two great wrinkles between the eye-brows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and a bag wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance. . . .

"I can neither laugh nor drink, have contracted an hesitating, disagreeable manner of speaking, and a visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have brought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it. Whence this romantic turn that all our family are possessed with? Whence this love for every

place and every country but that in which we reside? For every occupation but our own? This desire of fortune, and yet this eagerness to dissipate?"—*Letter to his brother, Rev. Henry Goldsmith, at Lowfield, near Ballymore, in Westmeath, Ireland, 1759.*

**10. a lengthening chain.** "The farther I travel, I feel the pain of separation with stronger force; those ties that bind me to my native country and you are still unbroken; by every remove I only drag a greater length of chain." —*The Citizen of the World*, Letter III.

Indeed, "interposing trackless deserts" never did blot the "reverend figure" of his brother from his memory.

**21. press the bashful stranger to his food.** Cf. Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night, 97: "An' aft he's prest an' aft he ca's it guid. . . ."

**24. My prime of life in wandering spent and care.** "When will my wanderings be at an end? When will my restless disposition give me leave to enjoy the present hour? When at Lyons, I thought all happiness lay beyond the Alps; when in Italy, I found myself still in want of something, and expected to leave solicitude behind me by going into Romelia; and now you find me turning back, still expecting ease everywhere but where I am. It is now seven years since I saw the face of a single creature who cared a farthing whether I was dead or alive."—*The Bee*, I. *A Letter from a Traveller.*

**26. Some fleeting good.** "If I should judge of that part of life which lies before me by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous. Experience tells me, that my past enjoyments have brought no real felicity; and sensation assures me, that those I have felt are stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade; hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty; some happiness in long perspective still beckons me to pursue; and, like a losing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game." *The Citizen of the World*, Letter LXXIII.

**29. My fortune leads to traverse realms alone.** From 1752-1756 he was the pilgrim who made the Grand Tour

on foot. Fate had no post-chaise for him. Think of Gray, Walpole, Shelley and especially Byron, in their continental wanderings.

**57. oft a sigh prevails.** "Tenderness without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance."—*The Bee.*

We know according to Irving and Thackeray how generous Goldsmith was to the poor, how he relieved the distressed woman in the street by giving her his last guinea, and how ever his "purse and his heart were everybody's and his friends' as much as his own." We often think that, if in fourteen years "Goldy" could throw away £8000, it served him right to die £2000 in debt; but in passing this judgment we should take into consideration the pitiable objects of charity which were ever climbing Breakneck Stairs of Green Arbor Court, or congregating near the Sign of the Broom in Islington, or shivering in the winter storms near the Temple, or strolling along Edgeware Road. Much can be forgiven the man, who, at the beginning of his literary career, had written, "You know my heart; and that all who are miserable may claim a place there."

**69. panting at the line:** sweltering in heat at the equator.

**81. Nature, a mother kind.** Cf. Byron's "Childe Harold," Canto II:

> "Dear Nature is the kindest mother still . . ."

**84. On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side.** Idria is a town in the mountains of Carniola. It was in a forest on "Arno's shelvy side" that Shelley wrote:

> "Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
> I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"
> —"Ode to the West Wind."

**87. art.** ". . . taste is composed of nature improved by art. . . ."—*Essay XII.*

**91–98.** The fine sentiment here is plainly anticipatory of the central idea or theme of "The Deserted Village."

**103. neglected shrub.** Here is romanticism strongly in

evidence. As Gray admired the mountains, so Goldsmith the steep; and, by his notice of the neglected shrub, he becomes a forerunner of Burns, who made Mossgiel farm famous by the "Mountain Daisy":

> "But thou, beneath the random bield
> O' clod or stane,
> Adorns the histie stibble field,
> Unseen, alane."

**144. plethoric.** "In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness; their former opulence only rendered them more impotent."—*The Citizen of the World.* [MITFORD, Pickering, 1839.] Cf. "The Deserted Village," 385-394.

**150. The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade.** Cf. Browning's "Up at a Villa—Down in the City." Goldsmith explains such in III. of *The Present State of Polite Learning*, when he says of Italy: "Happy country . . . where the wits even of Rome are united into a rural group of nymphs and swains, under the appellation of modern Arcadians; where in the midst of porticoes, processions, and cavalcades, abbés turned shepherds, and shepherdesses without sheep indulge their innocent *divertisement*." [MITFORD, Pickering, 1839.]

**154. The sports of children satisfy the child.** The reader will find the following anecdote interesting in throwing light on the couplet, 153-154.

"Either Reynolds, or a mutual friend who immediately communicated the story to him, called at the lodgings of the Poet, opened the door without ceremony, and discovered him, not in meditation, or in the throes of poetic birth, but in the boyish office of teaching a favourite dog to sit upright upon its haunches, or, as is commonly said, to beg. Occasionally he glanced his eye over his desk, and occasionally shook his finger at his unwilling pupil in order to make him retain his position, while on the page before him was written that couplet, with the ink of the second line still wet, from the description of Italy:

> 'By sports like these are all their cares beguiled,
> The sports of children satisfy the child.'—PRIOR."

Dobson says, "Something of consonance between the verses and the writer's occupation seems at once to have struck the visitor, and Goldsmith frankly admitted that the one had suggested the other."

**159. Cæsars.** Cf. Byron's *Manfred*, III. iv.:

> "While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls
> Grovel on earth in indistinct decay. . . ."

**169. the barren hills.** Thomson in his "Liberty" does not ignore the beauty of Alpine scenery. We read of "shaggy mountains" that charm; and in Collins's "Ode to Liberty" there is the couplet:

> "Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
> On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak . . ."

and phrases written of Britain's wild grandeur: "cliff sublime and hoary," "wolfish mountains," "a wide wild storm," and "the shouldering billows." It was on these crude materials that Shelley, Byron, and Wordsworth erected their sublime nature descriptions.

**173. the mountain's breast.** Cf. Milton's "L'Allegro":

> "Mountains, on whose barren breast
> The labouring clouds do often rest. . . ."

**186. Breasts.** It is unnecessary to criticise adversely Mitford, Masson, and Hales, for substituting "breathes" for "breasts" in their texts; the first word is banal, the second lends vigor.

**193. Smiles by his cheerful fire.** Cf. Burns's "To Dr. Blacklock":

> "To make a happy fireside clime
> To weans and wife,
> That's the true pathos and sublime
> Of human life."

Note how the couplets convey conceptions that are decidedly romantic in giving us that "one touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin." Cf. 205-206.

**244. With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire.** Goldsmith did not visit France again until July, 1770. The author of "The Deserted Village" must have had

many thoughts of "auld lang syne" as he passed from Calais to Paris by way of Lisle. The unknown tramp-boy, who had poorly piped on pastoral reed fifteen years before, had finally wandered into the hall of fame in pastoral poetry. His touch of the lute was no longer harsh or faltering, and all Europe was to praise his "wondrous power." 244-251. Read in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chap. XX., the adventures of George Primrose which largely form a part of Goldsmith's autobiography.

**253. gestic:** gesticulatory, used in reference to the manner of dancing.

**286. rampire:** a rampart or bulwark. Browning uses the same word in "Hervé Riel."

**299. Industrious habits.** In a letter written to his uncle Contarine from Leyden Goldsmith described Holland as follows:

"Nothing can equal its beauty. Wherever I turn my eyes, fine houses, elegant gardens, statues, grottoes, vistas, presented themselves, but when you enter their towns you are charmed beyond description. No misery is to be seen here; everyone is usefully employed."

**320. Hydaspes.** The river Jelum of Punjaub, India, famed by reason of its figuring in the verse of Virgil and Horace.

**325. Stern o'er each bosom. 325–334.** These lines had the honor of being quoted by Johnson, Saturday, October 23, 1773: "After a good night's rest, we breakfasted at our leisure. We talked of Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' of which Dr. Johnson spoke highly; and while I was helping him on with his great coat, he repeated from it the character of the British nation, which he did with such energy, that the tear started into his eye:

> 'Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state
> * * * * * * *
> And learns to venerate himself as man.' "
>
> —BOSWELL, *Life of Johnson.*

**362. to flatter kings, or court the great.** "Having one day a call to wait on the late duke, then Earl of Northumberland, I found Goldsmith waiting for an

audience in an outer room. I asked him what had brought him there: he told me an invitation from his lordship. I made my business as short as I could, and, as a reason, mentioned that Dr. Goldsmith was waiting without. . . . I retired, and staid in the outer room to take him home. Upon his coming out I asked him the result of his conversation: 'His lordship,' says he, 'told me he had read my poem,' meaning *The Traveller*, 'and was much delighted with it; that he was going lord lieutenant of Ireland, and that, hearing that I was a native of that country, he should be glad to do me any kindness.' And what did you answer, asked I, to this gracious offer? 'Why,' said he, 'I could say nothing but that I had a brother there, a clergyman, that stood in need of help: as for myself, I have no dependence on the promises of great men: I look to the booksellers for support, they are my best friends, and I am not inclined to forsake them for others.' "—SIR JOHN HAWKINS.

Compare with this anecdote Dr. Johnson's letter, written February 7, 1755, to Lord Chesterfield: "Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. . . .

"Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed until I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be dis-

appointed though I should conclude it if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

"My Lord,
"Your Lordship's most humble,
"Most obedient servant,
"SAM. JOHNSON."

**381. contending chiefs.** "It is not yet decided in politics whether the diminution of kingly power in England tends to increase the happiness or freedom of the people. For my own part, from seeing the bad effects of the tyranny of the great in those republican states that pretend to be free, I cannot help wishing that our monarchs may still be allowed to enjoy the power of controlling the encroachments of the great at home."

—Goldsmith's *Preface to History of England*, cited by MITFORD.

Read Goldsmith's *Essay IX. National Concord.*

Mitford further cites *The Vicar of Wakefield:* "It is the interest of the great to diminish kingly power as much as possible." The Whigs in two factions were trying to win in opposition to the Tories, who ardently clung to George III.

**386. Laws grind the poor.** Mitford throws light on this line from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chap. XIX.:

"What they may then expect, may be seen by turning our eyes to Holland, Genoa, or Venice, where the laws govern the poor, and the rich govern the law. I am then for, and would die for monarchy, sacred monarchy: for if there be anything sacred amongst men, it must be the anointed Sovereign of his people; and every diminution of his power, in war or in peace, is an infringement upon the real liberties of the subject."

Thus we see Goldsmith's attitude toward the whole question of how far a king should control a nation.

**420. To stop too fearful.** "Johnson wrote line 420 . . . and the concluding ten lines, except the last couplet but one."

—MITFORD.

**436. Luke's iron crown.** George and Luke Doza headed a desperate rebellion in Hungary in 1514 that proved to be a failure, and as a punishment George, not Luke, was tortured with a molten crown. According to Prior, Goldsmith used the name Luke to avoid any allusion to his sovereign, George III.

**436. Damiens' bed of steel.** The reference is to Robert François Damiens, who tried to assassinate Louis XV. in 1757. He was tortured in an iron bed-chair in the Conciergerie, and was afterward executed.

## THE HERMIT

THIS ballad was probably written sometime after October 28, 1762, and was privately printed in 1765 for the Countess of Northumberland. For a little of his material Goldsmith was indebted to Percy's "The Gentle Herdsman." Sir John Hawkins said of the ballad that it was "one of the finest poems of the lyric kind that our language has to boast of," and Goldsmith himself liked it so much that he said, "As to my 'Hermit,' that poem cannot be amended." By its contents we feel Goldsmith's susceptibility to the romanticism which received such an impetus from the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, in 1765. In the following year it was inserted in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

## WHEN LOVELY WOMAN STOOPS TO FOLLY

"I SAID, 'Do you like Goldsmith's "When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly?"' And he replied, 'I love it.'"

—*Locker-Lampson to Tennyson, Memoir II., 73.*

## ELEGY WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

**5. Islington.** ". . . continuing my course to the west, I soon arrived at an unwalled town, called Islington.

"Islington is a pretty, neat town, mostly built of brick, with a church and bells; it has a small lake, or rather pond, in the midst, though at present very much neglected."

—*The Citizen of the World*, Letter CXXII.

It was in "this fair and beautiful town" that Goldsmith lived from 1762 to 1764, and it was here that the burlesque elegy was probably written to be kept for insertion in *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

## AN ELEGY ON THAT GLORY OF HER SEX, MRS. MARY BLAIZE

THIS pleasant bit of nonsense was printed in *The Bee*, 1759, and possesses the same characteristics of style as that of the "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog." By some fine critics it is regarded as a classic of its kind. Dobson says, "in the 'Elegy on Mrs. Mary Blaize,' borrowing a trick from the old song of M. de la Palisse, and an epigrammatic finish from Voltaire, he contrives to laugh anew at the many imitators of Gray."

**26. Kent Street.** Goldsmith in 1756, after returning from his European wanderings, practised medicine at Bankside, Southwark, where, according to Dobson, "he must have made the acquaintance of that worshipful Madam Blaize, whom, three years later, he celebrated in *The Bee.* 'Kent Street,' he sings—

> 'well may say
> That had she lived a twelvemonth more
> She had not died to-day.'

and Kent Street, then sacred to beggars and broom men, traverses Southwark."

## EPITAPH ON DR. PARNELL

**1. Parnell:** Dr. Thomas Parnell, 1679-1718, Archdeacon of Clogher, a friend of Pope's, an essayist, and a poet of no mean ability. "Celestial themes confessed his tuneful aid" in such fine bits of poetry as "Hymn to Contentment," the "Night-Piece on Death," and "The Hermit." His last-named, "sweetly moral lay," in heroic couplets, is, as Goldsmith said, the best known and the one on which "his best reputation is grounded." The "Night-Piece on Death" deserves the high praise given it by Goldsmith, who, in his *Life of Dr. Parnell*, said it "might be made to

surpass all those night-pieces and churchyard scenes that have since appeared." Thus, it is evident, he preferred it to Blair's "Grave," to Young's "Night Thoughts," and even to Gray's "Elegy."

This "Epitaph" was written in 1770 at the time Goldsmith published his *Life of Dr. Parnell.*

## STANZAS ON THE TAKING OF QUEBEC

THIS poem was first printed in *The Busy Body*, 1759. It is decidedly original, and therefore is to be set apart from those trifles which Goldsmith at this time was striking off from French models. One should note that the poem is cast in heroic quatrains, in which Gray had written his "Elegy." This is suprising from one who, in 1759, disliked any departure from the heroic couplet style of verse.

5. **Wolfe.** Goldsmith was always a fervent patriot, being ever jealous of Engalnd's honor at home and abroad; and by reason of this, and because, as some think, he was a relative of Wolfe's, it was very natural for him to write lines commemorating the heroic death of the General on the Heights of Abraham.

## SONGS

"The Wretch Condemned with Life to Part" and "O Memory! Thou Fond Deceiver" were published in 1776; they are songs taken from "The Captivity: an Oratorio," written in 1764, but not published until 1820.

## RETALIATION

THIS poem was published April 19, two weeks after the death of Goldsmith, and was occasioned, according to Mitford, by the following occurrences: "Dr. Goldsmith and some of his friends occasionally dined at the St. James's Coffee-house. One day it was proposed to write epitaphs on him. . . . Garrick wrote, offhand, with a good deal of humour, an epitaph on Goldsmith. Dr. Bernard also gave him an epitaph. Sir Joshua sketched his bust in pen and ink." Garrick's epitaph was:

"Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

Johnson and Burke did not write epitaphs.

Cumberland in his *Memoirs* gives an interesting account of the meeting and of how Goldsmith retaliated at the next meeting, at which for the last time he enjoyed the company of his friends.

Davies in his *Life of Garrick* says: "In no part of his works has this author discovered a more nice and critical discernment, or a more perfect knowledge of human nature, than in this poem; with wonderful art he has traced all the leading features of his several portraits, and given with truth the characteristical peculiarities of each: no man is lampooned, and no man is flattered."

1. **Scarron.** According to Dobson, Goldsmith had just been translating Scarron's "Roman Comique," and thinking of the famous picnic dinners, compares his friends to dishes.

3. **landlord:** the host of St. James's coffee-house.

5. **Dean:** Dean of Derry, Dr. Barnard.

6. **Burke:** Edmund Burke.

7. **Will:** William Burke, a relation of Edmund Burke's and late secretary to General Conway.

8. **Dick:** Richard Burke, a lawyer and younger brother of Edmund's.

9. **Cumberland:** Richard Cumberland, the chief dramatist of the sentimental school. His finest play is *West Indian*, 1771.

10. **Douglas:** the Canon of Windsor, a Scotchman.

11. **Garrick:** the famous actor, David Garrick.

14. **Ridge:** John Ridge, an Irish lawyer. **Reynolds,** Sir Joshua.

15. **Hickey:** a bustling Irish lawyer, who had been especially a bore to Goldsmith on his second visit to France in 1770.

29. **Edmund:** Northcote says: "We then spoke of 'Retaliation,' and praised the character of Burke in particular as a masterpiece. Nothing that he had ever said or done but what was foretold in it: nor was he painted as the principal figure in the foreground with the partiality of a

friend, or as the great man of the day, but with a background of history, showing both what he was and what he might have been."

34. **Townshend:** T. Townshend, M. P., who afterward became Lord Sydney.

43. **William.** See note on 7.

51. **Richard.** See note on 8.

54. **breaking a limb.** He had been so unfortunate as to break an arm on one occasion and a leg on another.

62. **Terence:** Publius Terentius Afer, a celebrated Roman comic poet. He was born at Carthage about 195 B.C., and died in 159 or 158 B.C., George Colman made an excellent translation of Terence into English verse in 1764.

86. **Dodds:** Rev. Dr. Dodd, who was hanged for forgery in 1777. Dr. Johnson tried his best to save him.

86. **Kenrick:** Dr. Kenrick, who prompted the scurrilous "Tom Tickle" letter, which hinted at Goldsmith's being enamored of "the Jessamy Bride," and which caused Goldsmith to use personal violence on Evans.

87. **Macpherson:** James Macpherson, the author of *Ossian*. The allusion is to his translation of Homer.

89. **Lauders and Bowers:** William Lauder and Archibald Bower, who were Scotch authors.

95. **actor.** Tom Davies, the veteran actor, says: "the sum of all that can be said for and against Mr. Garrick, some people think, may be found in these lines of Goldsmith [93-124] . . . Garrick's features in the 'Retaliation' are somewhat exaggerated."

115. **Kelly:** Hugh Kelly, the dramatist, whose sentimental comedy, *False Delicacy*, in Garrick's hands took away the laurels from Goldsmith's *The Good-Natured Man* in 1768. He also wrote an inferior drama, *A Word to the Wise*, 1770.

115. **Woodfall:** William Woodfall, printer of *The Morning Chronicle*.

118. **be-Roscius'd.** Garrick was styled "the British Roscius." Quintus Roscius (d. 60 B.C.) was a famous Roman actor.

124. **Beaumonts and Bens:** Francis Beaumont. 1586–

1616, was an Elizabethan dramatist who collaborated with John Fletcher in producing about fifty plays, of which *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy* are the best. Ben Jonson, 1573?-1637, was the greatest Elizabethan dramatist continuing fater Shakespeare's death. His finest play is *The Alchemist*.

145. **Raphaels, Correggios:** Sanzio Raffaelle (Raphael), 1483-1520, was an Italian painter whose renowned works are the "Sistine Madonna" in Dresden, "La Belle Jardinière," "St. George and the Dragon," "St Michael" in the Louvre, the "Vision of Ezekiel" in Florence, the "Transfiguration" in the Vatican at Rome, and the "Marriage of the Virgin" in Milan. Antonio Allegri da Correggio, 1494-1534, was also a great Italian painter. Among his masterpieces are "The Reading Magdalen" and "Night" in Dresden, "The Ascension" in Parma, and the "Ecce Homo" in London.

146. Prior is responsible for supplying "By flattery unspoiled" as a beginning for line 147. If we can believe him, then these words were tagged on to "Retaliation," being the last ever penned by poor Goldy.

Goldsmith had drawn Burke and Garrick with Chaucerian humor of satire, and his portrait of Reynolds, though unfinished, by the genial good will and delicacy of expression, shows that when Johnson's turn would have come there would have been nothing portrayed of the bear but his skin.

*New Pocket Classics*

Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard

The Diverting History of John Gilpin

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea.

# ELEGY
# WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD

Thomas Gray

# THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

William Cowper

Edited by J. H. Castleman
Revised by H. Y. Moffett
Illustrated by James Scott

The Macmillan Company

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Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap. . . . . 5

And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour. . . . 9

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# INTRODUCTION

## A Brief Life of Thomas Gray

Thomas Gray, best known as the author of the "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard," was born at Cornhill, London, on December 26, 1716. His father, Philip Gray, appears to have been a man of weak character, improvident, and cruel; while his mother, Dorothy Antrobus Gray, was a woman of excellent qualities and lofty ideals.

The story of Gray's life is a short and simple one, for it was a life of secluded studiousness spent in the companionship of books, art, and nature. At ten years of age he entered Eton, where he was placed in the care of a maternal uncle, an assistant master in the school. Here he made the acquaintance of Horace Walpole, Richard West, and Thomas Ashton, who exercised a strong influence upon him, and who later were to do much toward bringing him into literary prominence.

In 1734 Gray left Eton and entered Peterhouse, Cambridge. Here he made but few friends and took no part in the sports of the students. His time seems to have been given almost entirely to study. History, classical literature, and modern languages were his favorite subjects, although he did not confine himself to these alone. By way of recreation, he occasionally composed Latin verses, translated from the Italian authors, and wrote letters to a limited number of acquaintances. He left Cambridge in 1738 without taking a degree.

The next year Gray was invited by his friend Walpole to accompany him on a continental tour—an invitation which he promptly accepted. They slowly made their way across France and into Italy, stopping at many places of historical interest and visiting the galleries at Paris, Florence, and Rome. But in the spring of 1741 the tour was brought to an abrupt end. The friends quarreled, apparently over some trivial matter, and separated, Gray returning to England a few months later. It was while on his homeward journey that he composed his famous Latin poem, the "Alcaic Ode," inspired by the magnificent scenery in Dauphiné, France. A few weeks after his return his father died, and he went with his mother to live at Stoke-Poges, near Windsor.

Gray now seems to have considered seriously the study of law, and decided to return to Cambridge for that purpose. Before reëntering the university, however, he spent the summer of 1742 at Stoke, and during that time wrote his first English poems. The "Ode on the Spring," "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West" (West died on June 1), "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and "Hymn to Adversity" all belong to this period, besides the opening stanzas of the "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard" and the fragment "Agrippina, a Tragedy."

Gray's return to Cambridge was followed in 1743 by his receiving his LL.B. degree. But at this point he evidently decided against law, for instead of continuing its reading, he took up a careful study of the Greek and Latin classics. For six years he gave his attention to this work, during which he practically neglected original composition. Only two poems, the "Ode on the Death of a Favorite

Cat" (1747) and "Alliance of Education and Government" (1748), were written within this period. The year 1747 also witnessed the publication of the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," the first of his verse to appear in print.

In 1749 Gray's aunt, Mary Antrobus, died. The poet was very fond of her, and her death is thought to have influenced him to resume and complete the "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard," which he had begun seven years before. Its final stanzas were finished early in 1750, and that same year "A Long Story" was produced. The "Elegy" was published the next year.

The year 1753 was an eventful one in Gray's life, as it witnessed the publication of his first volume of verse, under the title *Six Poems,* and the death of his mother, for whom he mourned the rest of his life, as he was devotedly attached to her. After the latter event he turned again to poetry for comfort, and in 1754 wrote the "Ode to Vicissitude" and "The Progress of Poesy," and began "The Bard." In 1756 he removed from Peterhouse to Pembroke Hall at Cambridge, that he might not be disturbed in his work, and in 1759 went up to London to study in the British Museum, where he remained two years. On the death of Cibber in 1757 his literary fame led to his being offered the position of Poet-Laureate, which his dread of publicity forced him to decline. That same year his *Pindaric Odes*—"The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard"—were put before the public by Walpole, with whom he had become reconciled.

Gray returned to Cambridge in 1761 and that year produced his *Norse Poems*—"The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin"—which he fol-

lowed three years later with his *Welsh Poems*—"The Triumphs of Owen," "The Death of Hoel," "Caradoc," and "Conan." In 1768 appeared a complete edition of his verse, which he had carefully revised. That same year he was appointed to the chair of Modern History and Laguage at Cambridge. His "Ode for Music," written and published in 1769, marks the close of his poetic activities.

Gray's life was now fast drawing to a close. For several years he had been afflicted with the gout, which was hereditary, and he sought to stay its progress by making yearly excursions through Great Britain, accounts of which he wrote in a series of delightful letters. In 1771 he planned an excursion to Switzerland, but it was not to be carried out. He was seized on July 24 with an acute attack of gout in the stomach, which proved fatal. He died on the 30th, and was buried beside his mother at Stoke-Poges in the church-yard made famous by his "Elegy."

## APPRECIATIONS

In the management of his metre, Gray has no superior. His ear was exquisite, and a few harsh lines,—and very harsh they are,—which are to be found in his poetry, were evidently left because he preferred to sacrifice the melody to the expression. The greatness of his reputation, contrasted with the small extent of the compositions upon which it is built, is the strongest proof of their excellence. Whether the slow and mosaic workmanship of Gray was an indication of genius, has often been questioned, but none except the few who were jealous of his popularity have ever hesitated

to admit that his happiest poetry must be classed among the most perfect in the world.

—*Quarterly Review* for December, 1853.

Gray, as a poet, may be said to have studied words more carefully than the things they represent. He looked on a lay figure of nature. He had no thronging imaginations which required the vent of verse. He went abroad in search of ideas, and brought them home to amplify and adorn them. If the beauty of a word or a phrase struck him, he worked it into his general design as best he could,—he could not afford to omit it. His imagination was at once vivid and sterile. He possesses isolated passages of remarkable force and beauty, and never sinks below a certain level; but among the most remarkable characteristics of his mind was an almost utter absence of creative or reproductive power, and an overpowering occupation with minutiae. Nothing came from him spontaneously. "If I do not write much, it is because I cannot." His poetry was wrung out drop by drop. . . . It is this over-balanced interest in details, acting under the influence of a highly-refined apprehension of beauty and fitness, that constitutes the peculiarity of Gray's poetry. He is the master of polished diction. Each separate particle of his poems has often force and exquisite beauty, but always finished propriety and perfect fitness of parts; the choice of words is at once remote from sameness and from singularity; and the rhythm steers a delicate medium at once remote from a dead level of smoothness, and from any approach to ruggedness.

—WILLIAM C. ROSCOE, *Poems and Essays.*

Gray's poetry, on the whole, astonished his contemporaries at first more than it pleased them; it was so unfamiliar, so unlike the sort of poetry in vogue. It made its way, however, after his death, with the public as with the few; and Gray's second biographer, Mitford, remarks that "the works which were either neglected or ridiculed by their contemporaries have now raised Gray and Collins to the rank of our two greatest lyric poets." . . . Beattie, at the end of the eighteenth century, writing to Sir William Forbes, says: "Of all the English poets of this age Mr. Gray is most admired, and I think with justice." Cowper writes: "I have been reading Gray's works, and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime." Adam Smith says: "Gray joins to the sublimity of Milton the elegance and harmony of Pope; and nothing is wanting to render him, perhaps, the first poet in the English language, but to have written a little more." And, to come nearer to our own times, Sir James Mackintosh speaks of Gray thus: "Of all English poets he was the most finished artist. He attained the highest degree of splendor of which poetical style seemed to be capable."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Essays in Criticsm.*

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## A BRIEF LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER

WILLIAM COWPER was born at Great Berkhampstead, Hertfordshire, England, on November 15, 1731. His father, the Reverend John Cowper, chaplain to George the Second and rector of Great Berkhampstead, was a descendant of one of the oldest and best-known families in England, numbering among its members such men as Spencer Cowper, Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and William Cowper, Lord High Chancellor. His mother, formerly Anne Donne, of the family of Dr. John Donne, the celebrated Dean of St. Paul's, was of even higher birth, tracing her descent, it is said, from Henry the Third, and also from the celebrated poet John Donne.

When Cowper was six years old, his mother died, and he was soon afterward enrolled in a private school at Market Street, a village a few miles from his home. He remained there for two years, when an infection of the eyes compelled him to give up his studies for a time. In 1741 he reëntered school, this time at Westminster Academy, where

Vincent Bourne was a master, and Warren Hastings, Robert Lloyd, and Charles Churchill were among the boys. While here, he took an active part in the life of the institution, both in the classroom and on the playground, read widely, and first experimented with verse. He left the academy in 1749.

After spending a few months with his father at Great Berkhampstead, Cowper went to London, where he entered the home of Mr. Chapman, a solicitor, to study law. He made but little progress, however, for the work was not congenial, and he spent most of his time in the company of friends. Long afterward, in speaking of this period in his life, he said, "I was bred to the law, a profession to which I was never much inclined and in which I engaged, rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father, than because I had any hope in it myself."

In 1752 Cowper took chambers in the Inner Temple. By this step he presumably became a regular student of law, although his advancement was no more rapid now than before. While he no longer passed his time in idleness, instead of giving his attention to jurisprudence, he became deeply interested in literature. He asosciated himself with several of the writers of the period, became a member of a literary club, wrote and published several ballads and prose compositions, made a careful study of Pope's translation of Homer, and translated two books of Voltaire's *Henriade*. In short, as one critic has expressed it, "The twelve years which he spent in the Temple were, if not entirely devoted to classical pursuits, yet so much engrossed by them as to add little or nothing to the slender

stock of legal knowledge which he had previously acquired in the house of the solicitor."

In 1763, through the assistance of relatives and friends, Cowper was offered the nomination to the offices of Reading Clerk and Clerk of the Private Committees in the House of Lords. But his sensitive nature shrank from publicity, and he sought the more private position of Clerk of the Journals. To his dismay he learned that to secure this office he would have to appear for examination at the bar of the House. As the time approached, he was overcome with morbidity, which presently developed into insanity. He attempted several times to kill himself and was removed to an asylum at St. Albans for safe keeping. There, after fifteen months, he was restored to health, mainly through the efforts of Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, himself a writer of some repute. Convinced that it was best for him to stay away from London, he now went to the quiet little town of Huntingdon, where he had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the Reverend William Unwin and wife, whose influence was to prove of such importance in his life and literary career. In 1767 Mr. Unwin died, and Cowper removed with Mrs. Unwin to Olney in Buckinghamshire, where John Newton was curate. The change proved a beneficial one, for although the poet was again attacked by insanity in 1773, he was in the midst of sympathetic friends whose kind treatment soon restored him. He and Newton became close associates, and together they wrote the celebrated *Olney Hymns*, which were published in 1779.

But it was not until 1780 that Cowper seriously turned his attention to the writing of verse. From

time to time he had written short poems, but hardly with the view of becoming a literary character. He now worked earnestly, and in 1782 published his first volume. After the fashion of the day it consisted almost wholly of didactic poems on conversation, retirement, and kindred subjects, several of which were suggested by Mrs. Unwin, to whose encouragement the whole work in a sense was due. Three years later his second volume appeared, containing among others the author's two best-known productions, "The Task" and "The Diverting History of John Gilpin," both of which were inspired by Lady Austen, a fascinating person with whom Cowper had lately become acquainted. These volumes, and especially the second, had a powerful effect upon the literary tastes of the time, and mark the beginning of a new order in English poetry. In them love of nature, romanticism, naturalness, and spontaneity once more assert themselves, and the Pope-Dryden school was doomed.

In 1786 Lady Hesketh, a cousin, took Lady Austen's place in the poet's life. Through her influence he translated Homer (published in 1791), one of his most noteworthy achievements. Later she took him and Mrs. Unwin to live at Weston, where he continued his writing. But sorrow and misfortune now came upon him. In 1791 Mrs. Unwin, who had cared for him so tenderly in his illnesses and whom he loved devotedly, was taken with a lingering sickness, from which she died in 1796. He grew feeble in body and dejected in mind, and another attack of insanity seemed imminent. Yet in the midst of this gloom his pen was still active, and some of his best short poems were produced, among them "Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture," "To Mary," and "The Casta-

way." In 1794 a pension of £300 was granted him by the government in recognition of his contribution to English letters; but it came too late to be of any real service, for death was near at hand. He died at East Dereham, Norfolk, on April 25, 1800, and was buried in St. Edmund's Chapel in that village. On his monument the following stanza is inscribed:

Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favorite name;
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise;
His highest honors to the heart belong;
His virtues formed the magic of his song.

### APPPRECIATIONS

The great merit of this writer (Cowper) appears to us to consist in the boldness and originality of his compositions, and in the fortunate audacity with which he has carried the dominion of poetry into regions that had been considered as inaccessible to her ambition. . . . He took as wide a range in language, too, as in matter; and shaking off the tawdry incumbrance of that poetical diction which had nearly reduced the art to the skilful collocation of a set of appointed phrases, he made no scruple to set down in verse every expression that would have been admitted in prose, and to take advantage of all the varieties with which our language could supply him.

—LORD JEFFREY, *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1803.

His language has such a masculine, idiomatic strength, and his manner, whether he rises into grace or falls into negligence, has so much plain and familiar freedom, that we read no poetry with a deeper conviction of its sentiments having come from the author's heart, and of the enthusiasm, in whatever he describes, having been unfeigned and unexaggerated. He impresses us with the idea of a being whose fine spirits had been long enough in the mixed society of the world to be polished by its intercourse, and yet withdrawn so soon as to retain an unworldly degree of simplicity and purity.

—THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Of Cowper, how shall I express myself in adequate terms of admiration? The purity of his principles, the tenderness of his heart, his unaffected and zealous piety, his warmth of devotion, the delicacy and playfulness of his wit, and the singular felicity of his diction, all conspire by turns,

"To win the wisest, warm the coldest heart."

Cowper is the poet of a well-educated and well-principled Englishman. "Home, sweet home" is the scene—limited as it may be imagined—in which he contrives to concentrate a thousand beauties, which others have scattered far and wide upon objects of less interest and attraction. His pictures are, if I may so speak, conceived with all the tenderness of Raffaelle, and executed with all the finish and sharpness of Teniers. No man, in such few words, tells his tale, or describes his scene, so forcibly and so justly. . . . The popularity of Cowper

gains strength as it gains age: and, after all, he is the poet of our study, our cabinet, and our alcove.

—DR. THOMAS F. DIBDIN.

As a poet, Cowper was a man of great genius, and, in a day when poetry was more read than at present, enjoyed a popularity almost unexampled. The strain of his writing was familiar even to homeliness. He drew from his own resources only; throwing off all affectation and reserve, he made his readers acquainted with all his sentiments and feelings, and did not disguise his weaknesses and sorrows. . . . His views of nature were drawn from personal observation; all his readers could remember, or at any time see, those which precisely resembled the subjects of his description. He associated no unusual trains of thought, no feelings of peculiar refinement, with the grand and beautiful of nature, while at the same time the strain of his sentiment was pure, manly, and exalted. By addressing himself to the heart universal, and using language such as could be understood by the humble as well as the high, he influenced a wider circle than any poet who went before him; and by inspiring a feeling of intimacy, a kind of domestic confidence in his readers, he made his works household words.

—W. B. O. PEABODY, *North American Review* for January, 1834.

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# ELEGY

## WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD°

# ELEGY

## WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD°

THE curfew° tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind° slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,°
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude° forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,

The cock's shrill clarion,° or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.°

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe° has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,°
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits° alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap.

The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire°;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,°
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene°
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,° that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton° here may rest,

Some Cromwell° guiltless of his country's
blood.

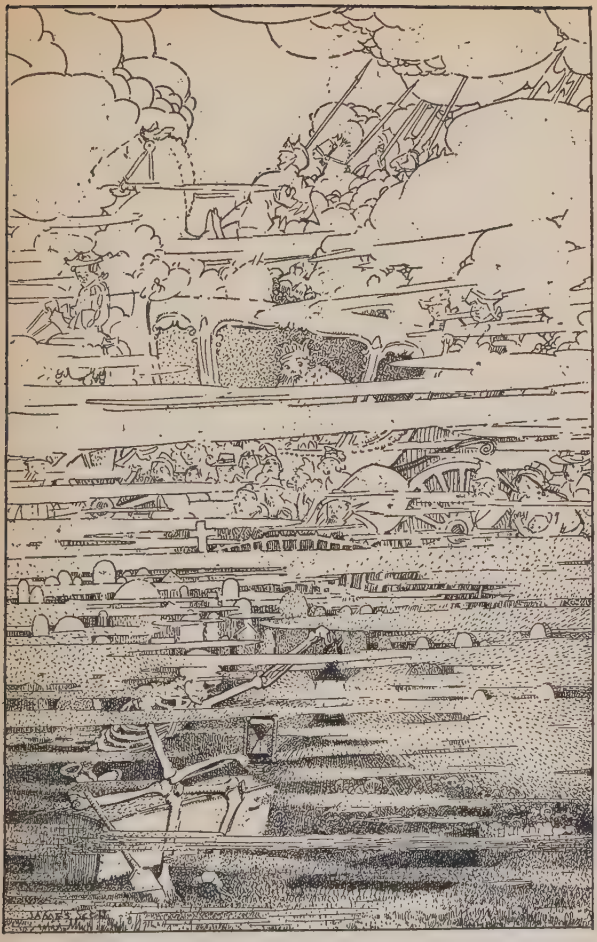
The applause of listening senates to com-
mand,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes con-
fined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding° crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.



And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,°
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance,° by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.°

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,°
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
'Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn°."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science° frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:

He gave to Misery (all he had) a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

## ODE ON THE SPRING°

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,°
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler° pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,°
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse° shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardor of the crowd,

How low, how little are the proud,
  How indigent° the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care;
  The panting herds repose;
Yet hark, how through the peopled air
  The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
  And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
  Quick-glancing to the sun.°

To Contemplation's sober eye°
  Such is the race of Man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
  Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter through life's little day,
  In fortune's varying colors drest:
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
  They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
  The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
  A solitary fly°!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,

No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone°—
We frolic, while 'tis May.

## ODE

### ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

Ye distant spires, ye antique° towers,
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy Shade°;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights° the expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames° along
His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills! ah pleasing shade,
Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain°!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,

And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen°
Full many a sprightly race,
Disporting on thy margent green,
The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmuring labors ply°
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue

Wild wit, invention ever-new,
And lively cheer of vigor born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly the approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around them wait
The Ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand,
To seize their prey, the murtherous band!
Ah, tell them, they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,

To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild°
Amid severest woe.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every laboring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo! Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemned alike° to groan,
The tender for another's pain,
The unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

## HYMN TO ADVERSITY°

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless power,°
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, designed,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain Prosperity received,

To her they vow their truth, and are again
believed.

Wisdom in sable garb arrayed,
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chastening hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors° clad,
Not circled with the vengeful band°
(As by the impious thou art seen)
With thundering voice, and threatening mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty.

Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound, my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are, to feel, and know myself a
Man.

## SONNET

### ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST°

In vain to me the smiling mornings° shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant° join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire°;
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain;
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

## ODE

### ON THE DEATH OF A FAVORITE CAT

### DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,°
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow;

Demurest of the tabby° kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii° of the stream:
Their scaly armor's Tyrian hue°
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)

The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times° emerging from the flood,
She mewed to every watery God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin° came, no Nereid° stirred;
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard.
A favorite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize;
Nor all, that glisters, gold.°

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY°

### I. 1

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,°
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs°
A thousand rills their mazy progress take;
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,

Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign°:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

I. 2

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,°
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing° airs,
Enchanting shell°! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War°
Has curbed the fury of his car,
And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king°
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing;
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,°
Tempered to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green°
The rosy-crownèd Loves° are seen
On Cytherea's day°
With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,

Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet;
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare;
Where'er she turns, the Graces° homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way;
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.

II. 1

Man's feeble race what ills await°!
Labor, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond° complaint, my Song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,°
He gives to range the dreary sky;
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's° march they spy, and glittering shafts of war.

## II. 2

In climes beyond the solar road,°
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers wildly sweet,
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

## II. 3

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,°
Isles, that crown the Ægean° deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus° laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves°
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,°
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish!
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Every shade and hallowed fountain

Murmured deep a solemn sound;
Till the sad Nine,° in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus° for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion°! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling° laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face. The dauntless Child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
"This pencil° take (she said) whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year;
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy,
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears."

III. 2

Nor second He,° that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of the Abyss to spy.

He passed the flaming bounds of Place and
Time;
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,°
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,°
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-
resounding pace.°

III. 3

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that
burn.°
But ah! 'tis heard no more°—
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear,°
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun;

Yet shall he mount,° and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar° fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

## THE BARD°

### A PINDARIC ODE

The following Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of the country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

#### I. 1

"RUIN seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion° on thy banners wait;
Though fanned by Conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.°
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,°
Nor even thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse,° from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side°

He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Glo'ster° stood aghast in speechless trance:
"To arms!" cried Mortimer,° and couched his quivering lance.

I. 2

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er cold Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair°
Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air)°
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs of the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.°

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,°
That hushed the stormy main;

Brave Urien° sleeps upon his craggy bed;
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred,° whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon° bow his cloud-topped head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,°
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale;
Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,°
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,°
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

II. 1

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,°
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall reëcho with affright

The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing King°!
She-Wolf of France,° with unrelenting fangs,
That tearest the bowels of thy mangled Mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven. What terrors round him wait°!
Amazement° in his van, with flight combined,
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind.

II. 2

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!
Low on his funeral couch he lies°!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable Warrior fled°?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn,° and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,

That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

II. 3

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,°
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast;
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,°
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye Towers of Julius,° London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,°
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.°
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread°;
The bristled Boar° in infant-gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.°
(The web is wove. The work is done.)
Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn;
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur° we bewail,
All hail, ye genuine Kings,° Britannia's issue, hail!

III. 2

"Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine°!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line°;
Her lion-port,° her awe-commanding face,
Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.

What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin,° hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-colored wings.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
In buskined° measures move
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice,° as of the cherub-choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,°
That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man, think'st thou, yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me. With joy I see
The different doom our Fates assign.
Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care,

To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

## THE FATAL SISTERS°

AN ODE. FROM THE NORSE TONGUE

Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)
Iron sleet of arrowy shower°
Hurtles in the darkened air.°

Glittering lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow!
('Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista, black, terrific maid,
Sangrida, and Hilda, see,°
Join the wayward work to aid:
'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through the ensanguined field,
Gondula, and Geira, spread
O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare:
Spite of danger he shall live.
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert-beach°
Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless Earl° is laid,
Gored with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a King° shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease; the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenor of our song.
Scotland, through each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed:
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field!

# THE DESCENT OF ODIN°

AN ODE. FROM THE NORSE TONGUE

UPROSE the King of Men with speed,
And saddled straight his coal-black steed;
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to Hela's drear abode.°
Him the Dog of Darkness spied;
His shaggy throat he opened wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage filled,
Foam and human gore distilled;
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.

Right against the eastern gate,°
By the moss-grown pile he sate;
Where long of yore to sleep was laid
The dust of the prophetic Maid.°
Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the runic rhyme;
Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead;

Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

PROPHETESS

What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mouldering bones have beat
The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews, and driving rain!
Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?

ODIN

A traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a warrior's son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,
For whom yon glittering board is spread,
Dressed for whom yon golden bed?

PROPHETESS

Mantling in the goblet see
The pure beverage of the bee°;
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;

'Tis the drink of Balder bold:
Balder's head to death is given.
Pain can reach the sons of Heaven!
Unwilling I my lips unclose:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

ODIN

Once again my call obey,
Prophetess, arise, and say,
What dangers Odin's child await,
Who the author of his fate?

PROPHETESS

In Hoder's hand the hero's doom;
His brother sends him to the tomb.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

ODIN

Prophetess, my spell obey,
Once again arise, and say,
Who the avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt?

PROPHETESS

In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace comprest,

A wondrous boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven-hair,
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam,
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile,
Flaming on the funeral pile.
Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

ODIN

Yet a while my call obey.
Prophetess, awake, and say,
What virgins these,° in speechless woe,
That bend to earth their solemn brow,
That their flaxen tresses tear,
And snowy veils, that float in air.
Tell me whence their sorrows rose;
Then I leave thee to repose.

PROPHETESS

Ha! no traveller art thou,
King of Men, I know thee now,
Mightiest of a mighty line——

ODIN

No boding Maid of skill divine
Art thou, nor Prophetess of good;
But Mother of the giant-brood!

PROPHETESS

Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
That never shall inquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again;
Till Lok has burst his tenfold chain.°
Never, till substantial Night
Has reassumed her ancient right;
Till wrapt in flames, in ruin hurled,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

## THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN°

A FRAGMENT. FROM THE WELSH

OWEN's praise demands my song,
Owen swift, and Owen strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,°
Gwyneth's shield,° and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart.

Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three° against him came;

This the force of Eirin° hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow long and gay
Lochlin° ploughs the watery way;
There the Norman° sails afar
Catch the winds, and join the war:
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burdens of the angry deep.

Dauntless on his native sands
The Dragon-Son of Mona stands°;
In glittering arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest.
There the thundering strokes begin,
There the press, and there the din;
Talymalfra's rocky shore°
Echoing to the battle's roar.°
Where his glowing eye-balls turn,
Thousand banners round him burn.
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honorable Death.

* * * * *

# THE DEATH OF HOEL°

AN ODE. SELECTED FROM THE GODODIN

HAD I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright
Upon Deïra's° squadrons hurled,
To rush, and sweep them from the world!

Too, too secure in youthful pride,
By them, my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's son; of Madoc old
He asked no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in nature's wealth arrayed,
He asked and had the lovely maid.

To Cattraeth's vale° in glittering row
Thrice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honor deck,°
Wreathed in many a golden link;
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.
Flushed with mirth and hope they burn;
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,
(Bursting through the bloody throng)

And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall.

## CARADOC

HAVE ye seen the tusky boar,
Or the bull, with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advance?
So Caràdoc bore his lance.

## CONAN°

CONAN's name, my lay rehearse,
Build to him the lofty verse,°
Sacred tribute to the bard,
Verse, the hero's sole reward.
As the flame's devouring force;
As the whirlwind in its course;
As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shivered oak;
Did the sword of Conan mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.

## SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER°

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune;
He had not the method of making a fortune;
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;

No very great wit, he believed in a God.
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.°

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE°

A MOMENT's patience, gentle Mistress Anne°;
(But stint your clack for sweet St. Charitie)
'Tis Willy begs, once a right proper man,°
Though now a book, and interleaved you see.

Much have I borne from cankered critic's spite,°
From fumbling baronets and poets small,
Pert barristers, and parsons nothing bright,
But what awaits me now is worst of all.

'Tis true, our master's temper natural
Was fashioned fair in meek and dove-like guise;
But may not honey's self be turned to gall
By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes°?

If then he wreak on me his wicked will,
Steal to his closet at the hour of prayer;
And (when thou hear'st the organ piping shrill)
Grease his best pen, and all his scribbles, tear.

Better to bottom tarts and cheese cakes nice,
  Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
Better be twisted into caps for spice,
  Than thus be patched and cobbled in one's grave.

So York shall taste what Clouet° never knew,
  So from our works sublimer fumes shall rise;
While Nancy earns the praise to Shakespeare due,
  For glorious puddings and immortal pies.

## SONG°

THYRSIS,° when we parted, swore
  Ere the spring he would return—
Ah! what means yon violet flower!
  And the buds that deck the thorn!
'Twas the lark that upward sprung!
'Twas the nightingale that sung!

Idle notes! untimely green!
  Why this unavailing haste?
Western gales and skies serene
  Speak not always winter past.
Cease, my doubts, my fears to move,
Spare the honor of my love.

## A LONG STORY°

IN Britain's Isle, no matter where,
  An ancient pile° of building stands:

The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employed the power of fairy hands

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each panel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls°;
The Seal and Maces danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
His high-crowned hat, and satin-doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's Queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.°

What, in the very first beginning!
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your history whither are you spinning?
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
A brace of warriors,° not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-a-pie from France,°
Her conquering destiny fulfilling,

Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon° kind Heaven
Had armed with spirit, wit, and satire;
But Cobham° had the polish given,
And tipped her arrows with good-nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air—
Coarse panegyrics would but tease her.
Melissa is her "nom de guerre."°
Alas, who would not wish to please her!

With bonnet blue and capucine,°
And aprons long they hid their armor;
And veiled their weapons bright and keen
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame, in the shape of Mr. P—t,°
(By this time all the parish know it)
Had told that thereabouts there lurked
A wicked imp they call a Poet,

Who prowled the country far and near,
Bewitched the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lamed the deer,
And sucked the eggs, and killed the pheasants.

My Lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,

She'd issue out her high commission°
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The Heroines undertook the task,
Through lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,
Rapped at the door, nor stayed to ask,
But bounce into the parlor entered.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle:

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-scurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creased, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Conveyed him underneath their hoops
To a small closet in the garden.

So Rumor says: (Who will, believe.)
But that they left the door ajar,

Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,
He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
The power of Magic was no fable;
Out of the window, whisk, they flew,
But left a spell° upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
The Poet felt a strange disorder;
Transparent birdlime formed the middle,
And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
The powerful pot-hooks did so move him,
That, will he, nill he, to the Great-house
He went, as if the Devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he preferred his case,
And begged his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have backed his quarrel,
But with a blush, on recollection,
Owned that his quiver and his laurel
'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was sate, the culprit there,
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping,

The lady Janes and Joans repair,°
And from the gallery stand peeping:

Such as in silence of the night
Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
(Styack° has often seen the sight)
Or at the chapel-door stand sentry;

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnished,
Sour visages, enough to scare ye,
High Dames of honor once, that garnished
The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.

The Peeress comes. The audience stare,
And doff their hats with due submission;
She curtsies, as she takes her chair,
To all the people of condition.

The Bard, with many an artful fib,
Had in imagination fenced him,
Disproved the arguments of Squib,°
And all that Groom° could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him,
When he the solemn hall had seen;
A sudden fit of ague shook him,
He stood as mute as poor Macleane.°

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
"How in the park beneath an old tree,

(Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry,)

"He once or twice had penned a sonnet;
Yet hoped, that he might save his bacon;
Numbers would give their oaths upon it.
He ne'er was for a conjurer taken."

The ghostly prudes° with hagged face
Already had condemned the sinner.
My Lady rose, and with a grace——
She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.

"Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
Why, what can the Viscountess mean?"
(Cried the square-hoods° in woful fidget,)
"The times are altered quite and clean!

"Decorum's turned to mere civility;
Her air and all her manners show it.
Commend me to her affability!
Speak to a Commoner and Poet!"

[Here five hundred stanzas are lost.]

And so God save our noble King,
And guard us from long-winded lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
And keep my Lady from her rubbers.°

## ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE°

Now the golden morn aloft
  Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
  She woos the tardy spring;
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
  Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance,
  The birds his presence greet;
But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Rise, my soul! on wings of fire,
  Rise the rapturous choir among;
Hark! 'tis Nature strikes the lyre,
  And leads the general song.

* * * *

Yesterday the sullen year
  Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;

Mute was the music of the air,
The herd stood drooping by;
Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday, nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace;
While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where Rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Misery treads,
Approaching Comfort view;
The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of Life.

See the wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of Pain,
At length repair his vigor lost,
And breathe and walk again;
The meanest flowret of the vale,

The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

Humble Quiet builds her cell,
Near the source whence Pleasure flows;
She eyes the clear crystalline well,
And tastes it as it goes.

* * * *

## THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT°

### A FRAGMENT

### ESSAY I

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins;
And as in climes, where winter holds his reign,
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies:
So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unformed, unfriended, by those kindly cares,
That health and vigor to the soul impart,

Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.
So fond Instruction on the growing powers
Of Nature idly lavishes her stores,
If equal Justice with unclouded face
Smile not indulgent on the rising race,
And scatter with a free though frugal hand
Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land.
But Tyranny has fixed her empire there,
To check their tender hopes with chilling fear,
And blast the blooming promise of the year.

This spacious animated scene survey
From where the rolling orb, that gives the day,
His sable sons with nearer course surrounds
To either pole, and life's remotest bounds.
How rude soe'er the exterior form we find,
Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,
Alike to all the kind impartial Heaven
The sparks of truth and happiness has given;
With sense to feel, with memory to retain,
They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain;
Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,
The event presages, and explores the cause.
The soft returns of gratitude they know,
By fraud elude, by force repel the foe,
While mutual wishes, mutual woes endear
The social smile, and sympathetic tear.

Say, then, through ages by what fate confined
To different climes seem different souls assigned?
Here measured laws and philosophic ease
Fix and improve the polished arts of peace;
There industry and gain their vigils keep,
Command the winds, and tame the unwilling deep.
Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail;
There languid pleasure sighs in every gale.
Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
Has Scythia° breathed the living cloud of war;
And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway
Their arms, their kings, their gods were rolled away.
As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.°
The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles, and her golden fields:
With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day, and heavens of azure hue;
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows.
Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,
While European freedom still withstands
The encroaching tide, that drowns her lessening lands;
And sees far off, with an indignant groan,

Her native plains, and empires once her own?
Can opener skies and suns of fiercer flame
O'erpower the fire that animates our frame;
As lamps, that shed at eve a cheerful ray,
Fade and expire beneath the eye of day?
Need we the influence of the northern star
To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war?
And, where the face of nature laughs around,
Must sickening virtue fly the tainted ground?
Unmanly thought! what seasons can control,
What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,
Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
By reason's light, on resolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes
O'er Libya's deserts and through Zembla's snows°?
She bids each slumbering energy awake,
Another touch, another temper take,
Suspends the inferior laws that rule our clay;
The stubborn elements confess her sway;
Their little wants, their low desires, refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine.

Not but the human fabric from the birth
Imbibes a flavor of its parent earth,
As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of their soil.
An iron-race the mountain-cliffs maintain,

Foes to the gentler genius of the plain;
For where unwearied sinews must be found
With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground,
To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,
To brave the savage rushing from the wood,
What wonder, if to patient valor trained,
They guard with spirit what by strength they gained?
And while their rocky ramparts round they see,
The rough abode of want and liberty,
(As lawless force from confidence will grow)
Insult the plenty of the vales below?
What wonder, in the sultry climes, that spread
Where Nile redundant o'er his summer-bed
From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Egypt with his watery wings,
If with adventurous oar and ready sail
The dusky people drive before the gale;
Or on frail floats to neighboring cities ride,
That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide

* * * *

["I find also among these papers a single couplet much too beautiful to be lost, though the place where he meant to introduce it cannot be ascertained."—MASON.]

When love could teach a monarch to be wise,
And gospel-light first dawned from Bullen's eyes.

## ODE FOR MUSIC°

[PERFORMED AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 1769.]

AIR

"HENCE, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
Comus, and his midnight-crew,°
And Ignorance with looks profound,
And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
Mad Sedition's cry profane,
Servitude that hugs her chain,
Nor in these consecrated bowers
Let painted Flattery hide her serpent-train in flowers.

CHORUS

"Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain,
Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
While bright-eyed Science watches round:
Hence, away, 'tis holy ground!"

RECITATIVE

From yonder realms of empyrean day
Bursts on my ear the indignant lay;
There sit the sainted Sage, the Bard divine,

The few, whom Genius gave to shine
Through every unborn age, and undiscovered clime.

ACCOMPANIED

Rapt in celestial transport they,
Yet hither oft a glance from high
They send of tender sympathy
To bless the place, where on their opening soul
First the genuine ardor stole.
'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,
And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
Meek Newton's self° bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

AIR

"Ye brown o'er-arching groves,
That Contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus° lingers with delight!
Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn,
Oft wooed the gleam of Cynthia,° silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy."

RECITATIVE

But hark! the portals sound, and pacing forth
With solemn steps and slow,
High potentates, and dames of royal birth,°
And mitred fathers in long order go:
Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow°
From haughty Gallia torn,
And sad Chatillon,° on her bridal morn
That wept her bleeding Love, and princely Clare,°
And Anjou's heroine, and the paler Rose,°
The rival of her crown and of her woes,
And either Henry there,°
The murdered saint, and the majestic lord
That broke the bonds of Rome.°

ACCOMPANIED

(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more,
Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.)
All that on Granta's fruitful plain°
Rich streams of regal bounty poured,
And bade these awful fanes and turrets rise,
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning° come;
And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies:

QUARTETTO

"What is grandeur, what is power?
Heavier toil, superior pain.
What the bright reward we gain?
The grateful memory of the good.
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude."

RECITATIVE

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
The venerable Margaret see°!
"Welcome, my noble son," (she cries aloud)
To this, thy kindred train, and me:
Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace."

AIR

"Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The flower unheeded shall descry,
And bid it round heaven's altars shed
The fragrance of its blushing head;
Shall raise from earth the latent gem
To glitter on the diadem."

RECITATIVE

"Lo! Granta waits to lead her blooming band,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, she
No vulgar praise, no venial incense flings;
Nor dares with courtly tongue refined
Profane thy inborn royalty of mind;
She reveres herself and thee.
With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow,
The laureate wreath, that Cecil° wore, she brings,
And to thy just, thy gentle hand
Submits the fasces° of her sway,
While spirits blest above and men below
Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay."

GRAND CHORUS

"Through the wild waves as they roar,
With watchful eye and dauntless mien,
Thy steady course of honor keep,
Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore;
The Star of Brunswick° smiles serene,
And gilds the horrors of the deep."

# THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN AND OTHER POEMS

## THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN°

### SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain° eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,°
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender°
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog°
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside° were mad.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
  Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
  His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
  Three customers come in.°

So down he came; for loss of time,
  Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
  Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
  Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
  "The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack°!" quoth he—"yet bring it me,
  My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
  When I do exercise.°"

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
  Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
  And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

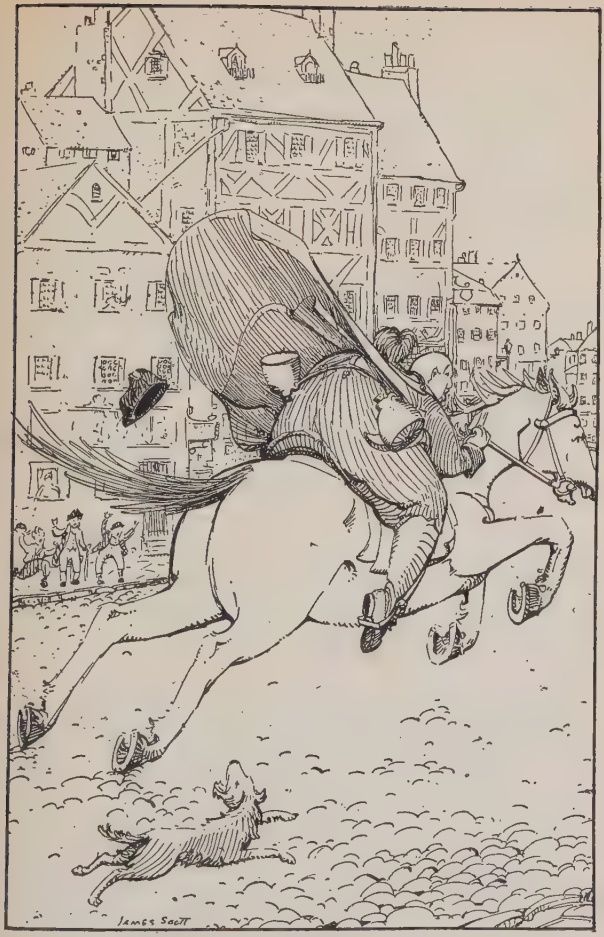
Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke° with all his might.




Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.°

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
"'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern gridle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington°
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash°
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! — Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired;"—
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there!
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.°

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
  Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
  Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
  And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
  In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come,
  And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,—
  They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
  His friend in merry pin,°
Returned him not a single word,
  But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
  A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
  Thus showed his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

Whence straight he came with hat and wig . . .

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
  That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet,
  John coming back amain:
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry°:

The youth did ride, and soon did meet,
John coming back amain.

"Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king!
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

## ON THE GRASSHOPPER

Happy songster, perched above,
On the summit of the grove,
Whom a dewdrop cheers to sing,
With the freedom of a king.
From thy perch survey the fields
Where prolific nature yields
Nought that, willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.

For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of spring,
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flowers.
Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly—thou and he are friends;
Nor thy never ceasing strains
Phœbus or the Muse disdains
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing,
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou?

## THE ROSE°

THE rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna conveyed,
The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,
And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seemed, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned;
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapped it—it fell to the ground.

"And such," I exclaimed, "is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resigned!

"This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloomed with its owner awhile;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address
May be followed perhaps by a smile."

## ODE TO APOLLO°

### ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN

PATRON of all those luckless brains
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning:

And why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
  Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
  A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
  It floats a vapor now,
Impelled through regions dense and rare
  By all the winds that blow.

Ordained, perhaps, ere summer flies,
  Combined with millions more,
To form an Iris° in the skies,
  Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
  Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever passed my pen,
  So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus,° if such be thy design,
  To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
  With equal grace below.

## THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY°

### NO FABLE

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
  Swept Ouse's silent tide,°

When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs° adorned with every grace
That spaniel found for me)

Now wantoned, lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent surveyed
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far, I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

*Beau* marked my unsuccessful pains
With fixed considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong
Dispersing all his dream,

I thence withdrew, and followed long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned;
*Beau,* trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discerned,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropped
The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, "The world," I cried,
"Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed:

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all."

## THE SHRUBBERY°

### WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION

O HAPPY shades! to me unblest!
Friendly to peace, but not to me!
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
  Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
  And please, if anything could please.

But fixed unalterable Care
  Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness everywhere,
  And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
  While peace possessed these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
  Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
  This moss-grown alley, musing, slow;
They seek like me the secret shade,
  But not like me to nourish woe!

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
  Alike admonish not to roam;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
  And those of sorrows yet to come.

## THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM°

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,

Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent—

"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
"As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the self-same Power divine
Taught you to sing and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify, and cheer the night."
The songster heard his short oration,
And, warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
Hence jarring sectaries° may learn
Their real interest to discern;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;
But sing and shine by sweet consent,

Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting, in each other's case,
The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

## VERSES

### SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK, DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ°

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;

They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

## ODE TO PEACE°

Come, peace of mind, delightful guest!
Return and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I, nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,
And pleasure's fatal wiles?

For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
  The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heaven that thou alone canst make?
  And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove, and the sequestered shed,
  To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
  Whate'er I loved before;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say,
  "Farewell! we meet no more"?

## THE MODERN PATRIOT°

REBELLION is my theme all day;
  I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
  A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
  On t'other side the Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
  But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What! hang a man for going mad!
Then farewell British freedom.

## REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE°

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

"In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship," he said, "will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind."

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
"Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

"Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again,)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

"On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them."

Then shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes:
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!

## THE LILY AND THE ROSE°

THE nymph must lose her female friend,
If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end,
If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
  Appeared two lovely foes,
Aspiring to the rank of queen,
  The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon reddened into rage,
  And, swelling with disdain,
Appealed to many a poet's page
  To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
  A fair imperial flower;
She seemed designed for Flora's hand,°
  The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
  The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
  The pride of the parterre°;

"Yours is," she said, "the nobler hue,
  And yours the statelier mien;
And, till a third surpasses you,
  Let each be deemed a queen."

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks
  The fairest British fair;
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
  They reign united there.°

## THE POPLAR FIELD°

THE poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse° on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favorite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charmed me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,°
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

## ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK, THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM°

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blessed be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,°
I will obey, not willingly alone,

But gladly, as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian° reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,

Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learnt at last submission to my lot;
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.°

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house° our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps, of all the kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionery plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed

By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks
That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile,)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,

That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast°
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,°"
And thy loved consort° on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.

My boast is not, that I deduce my birth°
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies.
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine:
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

## THE NEEDLESS ALARM°

### A TALE

THERE is a field through which I often pass
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,°
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighboring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.

A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourne,
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;
Nor Autumn yet had brushed from every spray,
With her chill hand the mellow leaves away;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack;
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,

And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick and all Dinglederry rang.

Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom pressed
The herb as soft, while nibbling strayed the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.
All seemed so peaceful, that from them conveyed,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,
The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,

Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long
Perceives in everything that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A Ram, the ewes and wethers sad addressed:

"Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prison-house below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The Ass; for he, we know, has lately strayed,
And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
Might be supposed to clamor for a guide.

But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear?
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed,
And fanged with brass, the demons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
That, life to save, we leap into the pit."

Him answered then his loving mate and true,
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian Ewe:°

"How! leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:
Or should the brambles interposed our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small;
For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.

Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wondered that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

## BOADICEA°

### AN ODE

WHEN the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak
  Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
  Full of rage and full of grief:

"Princess! if our aged eyes
  Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
  All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish—write that word
  In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish hopeless and abhorred,
  Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
  Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
  Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.°

"Other Romans shall arise,
  Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
  Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
  From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
  Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rushed to battle, fought, and died;
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!"

## EPITAPH ON A HARE°

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,

And to domestic bounds confined,
  Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
  His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
  And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
  And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
  With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
  On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads failed,
  Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
  Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
  And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
  For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
  Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
  He thus saw steal away,

Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humor's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath this walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

## ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE°

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED

[*To the March in "Scipio"*]

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,

Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again

Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

## SONG ON PEACE°

AIR—"MY FOND SHEPHERDS OF LATE"

No longer I follow a sound;
No longer a dream I pursue;
Oh Happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendor and dress,
In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seemed to possess,
But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
The voice of true Wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope,
And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks in it meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above.

## ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE°

SUNS that set, and moons that wane,
Rise and are restored again;
Stars that orient day subdues,
Night at her return renews.
Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth
Of the genial womb of earth,
Suffer but a transient death
From the winter's cruel breath.
Zephyr speaks; serener skies
Warm the glebe, and they arise.
We, alas! earth's haughty kings,
We, that promise mighty things,
Losing soon life's happy prime,
Droop, and fade, in little time.
Spring returns, but not our bloom;
Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

## EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON°

HERE Johnson lies, a sage by all allowed,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;

Who many a noble gift from Heaven possessed,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS°

Two nymphs,° both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possessed
A warm dispute once chanced to wage
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete
Had both alike been mild;
But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frowned oftener than she smiled;

And in her humor, when she frowned,
Would raise her voice, and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The nymphs referred the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle called, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavished all on her.

Then thus the god, whom fondly they
Their great Inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all.

"Since thus ye have combined," he said,
"My favorite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
With June's undoubted right,

"The minx shall, for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
And pinch your noses blue."

## YARDLEY OAK°

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren!—at my birth

(Since which I number threescore winters past)
A shattered veteran, hollow-trunked perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relics of ages!—could a mind, imbued
With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,
I might with reverence kneel and worship thee.

It seems idolatry with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks°
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.

Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball,
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs,
And all thine embryo vastness, at a gulp.
But fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellowed the soil
Designed thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared

The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
Of argument, employed too oft amiss,
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!

Thou fell'st mature; and in the loamy clod
Swelling with vegetative force instinct
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,°
Now stars; two lobes, protruding, paired exact;
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
And, all the elements thy puny growth
Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.

Who lived when thou wast such? Oh, couldst thou speak,
As in Dodona° once thy kindred trees
Oracular, I would not curious ask
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.

By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recovering, and misstated setting right——
Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the
woods,
And Time hath made thee what thou art—a
cave
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous
flocks
That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe-sheltered from the
storm.
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast out-
lived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast
pushed
Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
Then twig; then sapling; and, as century rolled
Slow after century, a giant-bulk
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushioned root
Upheaved above the soil, and sides embossed
With prominent wens globose—till at the last
The rottenness, which Time is charged to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.

What exhibitions various hath the world
Witnessed, of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!

Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
Destroys them. Skies uncertain, now the heat
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—
Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,
Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
Delight in agitation, yet sustain
The force that agitates, not unimpaired;
But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.

Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
From almost nullity into a state
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
Slow, into such magnificent decay.
Time was, when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,
That might have ribbed the sides and planked the deck

Of some flagged admiral°; and tortuous arms,
The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
To the four-quartered winds, robust and bold,
Warped into tough knee-timber,° many a load!
But the axé spared thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
The bottomless demands of contest waged
For senatorial honors. Thus to Time
The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labor, which had, far and wide,
By man performed, made all the forest ring.

Embowelled now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scooped rind, that seems
A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbiddest
The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
A quarry of stout spurs and knotted fangs,
Which, crooked into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet
Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
Pulverized of venality, a shell
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left
A splintered stump, bleached to a snowy white;
And some memorial none, where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The Spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force
Than yonder upstarts of the neighboring wood,
So much thy juniors, who their birth received
Half a millennium since the date of thine.
But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.

One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learned not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear;
But, moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, surveyed
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties; assigned
To each his name significant, and, filled
With love and wisdom, rendered back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or tasked his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Leaned on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.°

* * * * *

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE°

### WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

Whence is it that, amazed I hear
From yonder withered spray,

This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favor shown,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee, in song?

Or sing'st thou rather, under force
Of some divine command,
Commissioned to presage a course
Of happier days at hand°?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make even January charm,
And every season Spring.

## TO MARY°

THE twentieth year is well-nigh past,°
Since first our sky was overcast;

Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,°
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou playd'st the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight

Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,

Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

## THE CASTAWAY°

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevailed,
That, pitiless perforce,

They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford;
  And such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
  Delayed not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
  Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
  Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
  In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power,
  His destiny repelled;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried "Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
  His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
  Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

## THE TASK

### BOOK IV

### THE WINTER EVENING

ARGUMENT.—The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The wagoner—A

poor family piece—The rural thief—Public-houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter: what she was; what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,°
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks

Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh the important budget! ushered in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked°?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free°? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage;

Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen° all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio° of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise:
The dearth of information and good sense
That it foretells us always comes to pass.

Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean plundered of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and city feasts, and favorite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katerfelto,° with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;

Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man,
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return, a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too.° I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
O Winter! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou holdest the sun

A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powdered pert, proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.

The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice° symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth;
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at His awful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,

The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlooked for, life preserved and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
"Oh evenings worthy of the gods!"° exclaimed
The Sabine bard.° Oh evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
That I and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavory throng,
To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
And snappish dialogue that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof
(As if one master spring controlled them all)
Relaxed into a universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound;

But the world's Time is Time in masquerade.
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes; and where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus decked, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted Time, and night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far, oft turns aside
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen, delights him not; then coming home,

Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
With colors mixed for a far different use,
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the Night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day;
Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,
Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And whether I devote thy gentler hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,

When they command whom man was born to please;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlor twilight; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages expressed
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watched

The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share:
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed

By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favorite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently performed
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade that feared the chilling blast
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
  In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace

Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and puckered cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.
The learnèd finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,°
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy wagon is thy wife; and the poor beasts
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,

Humane as they would seem, not always show.
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warmed, while it lasts, by labor, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well,
And while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warmed.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half eaten without sauce
Of savory cheese, or butter costlier still,
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chained,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care,
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just

Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg;
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earned,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But ofttimes deaf to suppliants who would blush
To wear a tattered garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These ask with painful shyness, and refused
Because deserving, silently retire.
But be ye of good courage. Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny, well trained
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labor too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,

Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man° who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty, with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
Plashed° neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burden, and when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrenched the door, however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside

His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own: who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love!
Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume,° and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom; the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave° of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learnèd, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed

Its wasted tones and harmony unheard;
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perched on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill! 'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain the attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
The Excise is fattened with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,

Forever dribbling out their base contents,
Touched by the Midas finger° of the State,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call!
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fallen upon those happier days
That poets celebrate; those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro° sings,
And Sidney,° warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas° then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves.
The footsteps of simplicity, impressed
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing),
Then were not all effaced; then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it: I still must envy them an age
That favored such a dream, in days like these

Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides
Is tramontane,° and stumbles all belief.
No: we are polished now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manner, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost.
Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propped upon French heels; she might be deemed
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care.
The town has tinged the country; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but, alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.
Time was when in the pastoral retreat

The unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarmed. Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polished arms be primed with care,
And drop the night-bolt; ruffians are abroad;
And the first 'larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale

Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean,—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild fowl or venison, and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
Of public virtue ever wished removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures, now and then
A wrestling-match, a foot-race, or a fair,
Is balloted,° and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. The task performed,
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well;
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;

He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks° can make him; wears
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad,
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart,
To be a pest where he was useful once,
Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.
Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
But man associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,

Fades rapidly, and by compression marred,
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin°
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature, and disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red.
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music, and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.

But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,

But there I laid the scene. There early strayed
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too
The firstborn efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus,° assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favorite beech.
Then MILTON had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too, enamored of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favored lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley°! and though now reclaimed
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,

I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools;
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,°
Not unemployed, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of His hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in His works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been formed
And tutored with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,

Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden in which nothing thrives has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well°
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling°? Are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnished with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,

Yet feel the burning instinct; over-head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And watered duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardor he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.
Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the thronged abode
Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honors, or emolument, or fame,
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents: and God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wished.

# THE TASK

## BOOK V

### THE WINTER MORNING WALK

ARGUMENT.—A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastile, and a prisoner there—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country—Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon: while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,

In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents°
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storm should overset the leaning pile

Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher° and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighboring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossiped side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,

And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them naught: the imprisoned worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long-protracted rigor of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.

The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now
Repays their labor more; and perched aloft
By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam,° dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,

Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there embossed and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North.° No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found°
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace poetry might place
The armory of Winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,

And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frostbound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat) were there,
Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.

Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless as it seemed
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
At hewing mountains into men,° and some
At building human wonders mountain high.°
Some have amused the dull, sad years of life,
Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded,° and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain

Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed and sowed,
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The Deluge washed it out; but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death°; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan° of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad

In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth; these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.

They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,°
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born
To bear his burdens; drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service; his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.

Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs,° that have but croaked and died.
Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a god
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made!
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock

Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humor dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees°
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,

And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the State,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours:
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes;
We, for the sake of liberty, a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,

Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The State that strives for liberty, though foiled,
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful; power usurped
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
The surest presage of the good they seek.°
Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.°
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age

With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he who values liberty confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon,° life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball;
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labor; and the lover, who has chid

Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,°
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward, and then upward, then aslant,
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum exactly found
In all directions, he begins again:—
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,

And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation, makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean God,°
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery, and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence, till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the State,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapors, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art

To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
Yet, being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently, and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigor of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,°
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!

But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause
Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hewed them link from link. Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,

And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once called to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the State,
That promised once more firmness, so assailed
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless, expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was registered in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
The indiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away;
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure

By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,
And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the Word
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not His glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the Artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had He not Himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doomed it as insufficient for His praise.
These therefore are occasional, and pass;
Formed for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labors of His love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits He sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into His arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,

A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.
  Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense° his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless, from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downwards; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,

And death still future: not an hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonor by a worse relapse,
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tattered in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,

And stored the earth so plenteously with means
To gratify the hunger of his wish,
And doth He reprobate, and will He damn,
The use of His own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
Dishonors God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? Have they faith
In what, with such solemnity of tone
And gesture, they propound to our belief?
Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
(As often as, libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;

Till hardened his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but fostered his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to THE FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise;
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.
The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change

That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus,° and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,°
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure to his loved land,

The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till Persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew—
No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.°
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.°
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy

With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That planned, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeached
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city, planned or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every State,
And no condition of his changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,

Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain,
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
The paradise he sees, he finds it such;
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.

Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Nor for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference; inquires what strains were they°
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste

To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
Favored as ours, transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours?
As one who long detained on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land,
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home,
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth,
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,

With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employed,
Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are Thy witnesses, who speak Thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not or receive not their report.
In vain Thy creatures testify of Thee,
Till Thou proclaim Thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of Thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of Thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But Chance is not; or is not where Thou reignest:
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with Thy laws.

Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can,
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure,
Made such by Thee, we love Thee for that cause
For which we shunned and hated Thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all Thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind His own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears His power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word!
From Thee departing, they are lost and rove
At random without honor, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,

His high endeavor, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good!
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

# NOTES ON GRAY'S POEMS

## ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD

The "Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard" was begun probably in 1742 at Stoke-Poges, Buckinghamshire, and finished in 1750 at Cambridge. On its completion, it was circulated in manuscript among Gray's friends, at whose suggestion it was given to the great book-maker, Dodsley, for publication. It appeared in print on February 16, 1751, and sprang into instant popularity. It was copied far and wide, and was translated into all of the principal languages of Europe within a few months after it came out. It is now ranked as one of the great classics in English literature, and upon it much of Gray's fame as a poet rests.

LINE 1. **curfew:** The ringing of a bell at a fixed hour in the evening, originally designed as a signal to the common people to cover fires, extinguish lights, and retire to rest. The practice was introduced by William the Conqueror. (The word is derived from the French *couvre*, cover, and *feu*, fire.)

2. **wind.** Sometimes incorrectly printed "winds." The mistake was made in the first edition of the poem. Does the change affect the imagery?

11. **bower.** Used in the old sense of *sleeping-apartment.*

16. **rude:** rustic, simple. The poor people were buried in the church-yard; the rich, inside the church.

19. **The cock's shrill clarion.** Note the similarity between this expression and the following:

> "The crested *cock*, whose *clarion* sounds
> The silent hours."
> —MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. VII, ll. 443–444.

> "The *cock* that is the trumpet of the morn
> Doth with his lofty and *shrill*-sounding throat
> Awake the god of day."
> —SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*, Act I, Sc. I, ll. 148–151.

**20. lowly bed:** the cots on which they were accustomed to sleep; not the grave, though the latter is suggested.

**26. glebe:** the ground. (From the Latin *glaeba.*)

**33–36. The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,** etc. Gray probably had in mind the following lines from West when he wrote this stanza:

> "Ah me! what boots us all our boasted power,
> Our golden treasure, and our purple state;
> They cannot ward th' inevitable hour,
> Nor stay the fearful violence of fate."
> —"Monody on Queen Caroline," ll. 77–80.

**35. Awaits.** Not "await," as often printed. *Hour* is the subject, not the object of the verb.

**46. pregnant with celestial fire:** full of divine inspiration.

**51. rage:** enthusiasm.

**53–56. Full many a gem of purest ray serene,** etc. The thought in this stanza was by no means original with Gray, and other writers had expressed it in very similar words.

> "That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
> The unadorned bosom of the deep."
> —MILTON, "Comus," ll. 22–23.

> "In distant wilds by human eyes unseen,
> She rears her flowers, and spreads her velvet green;
> Pure gurgling rills the lonely desert trace,
> And waste their music on the savage race."
> —YOUNG, "Universal Passion," Satire V, ll. 229–232.

> "There is many a rich stone laid up in the bowels of the earth, many a fair pearl in the bottom of the sea, that never was seen, nor never shall be."
> —BISHOP HALL, "Contemplations," Bk. VI, p. 872.

**57. Some village Hampden:** John Hampden (1594-1643), a celebrated English statesman, who refused in 1636 to pay the ship-money tax levied by King Charles the First, for which he was arrested and fined. He was killed at the battle of Chalgrove Field.

**59. Some mute inglorious Milton:** John Milton (1608-1674). Milton and Hampden both lived in Buckingham-

shire, the same county in which the Stoke-Poges churchyard (the one in which Gray probably began the Elegy) is located. (See introductory note.)

**60. Some Cromwell:** Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), who led the Puritans in their rebellion against Charles the First, and after the execution of the king (1649) became Lord Protector of the British Isles.

In the original manuscript appear the names of Cato, Tully, and Cæsar, in place of the ones now used.

**73. madding.** Gray's use of this form of the word, no doubt, has had much to do with its acceptance. Cf. Thomas Hardy's title *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Note the effect of the comma after *strife*.

**81. spelt by the unlettered Muse:** composed or engraved by an uneducated person.

**95. chance:** perchance.

**100. lawn:** here, an open space in the wood. Milton uses the word in the same way:

> "Together both, ere the high *lawns* appeared
> Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
> We drove afield."
>
> —"Lycidas," ll. 25–27.

**105–112. Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,** etc. These two stanzas are engraved on a monument to Gray in Stoke Park near the church-yard.

**116. 'Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.** After this verse Gray originally inserted the following stanza:

> "There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
> By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
> The red-breast loves to build and warble there
> And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

**119. Science:** knowledge in general.

## ODE ON THE SPRING

The "Ode on the Spring" was written at Stoke in June, 1742, but was not published until 1748, when it appeared

under the title "Ode," in Dodsley's "Collection of Poems by Several Hands."

1. **Hours**: in classical mythology, the *Horæ*, goddesses of the seasons.

> "The Graces and the rosy-bosomed *Hours*,
> Thither all their bounties bring."
> —MILTON, "Comus," ll. 986–987.

5. **Attic warbler**: the nightingale; it is common in the province of Attica, eastern Greece.

> "Where the *Attic* bird
> Trills her thick-*warbled* notes the summer long."
> —MILTON, "Paradise Regained," Bk. IV, ll. 245–246.

14. **O'er-canopies the glade.** Gray quotes from Shakespeare in connection with this line:

> "A bank
> O'er-canopied with luscious woodbine."
> —*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, Sc. I, ll. 249, 251.

16. **Muse**: one of the nine goddesses who presided over poetry and the arts and sciences.

20. **indigent**: destitute, needy.

30. **Quick-glancing to the sun.** Gray here quotes from Milton:

> "Sporting with quick glance
> Shew to the sun their waved coats drop'd with gold."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. VII, ll. 405–406.

31–50. **To Contemplation's sober eye,** etc. Gray, in a letter to Walpole, admitted that he borrowed these ideas from Green: "I send," he wrote, "a bit of a thing for two reasons; first, because it is one of your favorites, Mr. M. Green; and next, because I would do justice. The thought on which my second ode [the "Ode on the Spring" was the second of Gray's odes in Dodsley's "Collection"] turns is manifestly stole from hence; not that I knew it at the time, but having seen this many years before, to be sure it imprinted itself on my memory, and forgetting the author, I took it for my own." The subject was the "Queen's Hermitage." Gray then quoted a long passage from the poem. See Gosse's edition, vol. II, p. 222.

**44. A solitary fly.** Gray early formed the habit of spending much of his time alone.

**49. Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone:** Gray was but twenty-five when he wrote this poem.

## ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

The "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" was written at Stoke in August, 1742, but did not appear in print until 1747. It was the first of Gray's English pieces to be published.

**1. antique:** ancient; not in the sense of "old-fashioned."

**4. Henry's holy shade:** "King Henry the Sixth, Founder of the College." (Author's note). Although never canonized, Henry the Sixth was regarded as a saint.

**6. Windsor's heights:** the site of Windsor Castle, the royal palace.

**9. hoary Thames.** Poets frequently refer to rivers as being old.

> "Next Camus, *reverend sire*, went footing slow."
> —MILTON, "Lycidas," l. 103.

> "In that blest moment from his oozy bed
> *Old father Thames* advanced his rev'rend head."
> —POPE, "Windsor Forest," ll. 329–330.

**14. A stranger yet to pain.** Gray had in mind the happy school days spent with his bosom friend, Richard West, who died in June, 1742. (See "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West.")

**21–30. Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen,** etc. This stanza refers to the sports of schoolboys: swimming, snaring birds, rolling hoops, and playing ball.

**31–32. While some . . . their murmuring labors ply:** conning over their lessons.

**79. And moody Madness laughing wild.** In connection with this line Gray quotes from Dryden:

> "Madness laughing in his ireful mood."
> —"Palamon and Arcite," Bk. II, l. 582.

**92. alike:** This word goes with "condemned," not with "to groan."

## HYMN TO ADVERSITY

The "Hymn to Adversity" like the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," was written at Stoke in August, 1742. It was first published in 1753, when it appeared in "Six Poems," a short collection of Gray's works.

**1–8. Daughter of Jove, relentless power,** etc. Gray borrowed freely from Milton in these lines:

> "The vassals of his anger, when the *scourge*
> Inexorably, and the *torturing hour*,
> Calls us to penance."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. II, ll. 90–92.

> "In *adamantine* chains and penal fire."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. I, l. 48.

> "Strange horror seize thee, and *pangs unfelt before*."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. II, l. 703.

**Daughter of Jove.** According to Homer, Ate (a personification of strife) was a daughter of Zeus.

**35. Gorgon terrors:** a reference to Medusa, whose head was covered with serpent-locks.

**36. vengeful band:** the Furies whose duty it was to punish wrong-doers.

## SONNET ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST

The "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West" was written, like the two preceding poems, at Stoke, in August, 1742, but was not published until 1775. West, who was an intimate associate of Gray both in boyhood and manhood, and who himself aspired to a literary career, died on June 1, 1742. (See note, l. 14, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.")

The sonnet is full of Miltonic expressions; note the following:

**1. smiling mornings.**

> "Than when fair *morning* first *smiles* on the world."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. V, l. 124.

**3. amorous descant.**

"All but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her *amorous descant* sung."
—"Paradise Lost," Bk. IV, ll. 602–603.

**4. attire.**

"Earth, in her rich *attire*
Consummate, lovely smiled."
—"Paradise Lost," Bk. VII, ll. 501–502.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVORITE CAT

The "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat" was produced early in 1747 on the occasion of the death of one of Horace Walpole's cats. A copy of it was sent to Mr. Walpole on March 1 of that year, and also to Thomas Wharton, to whom Gray humorously described it as the "most noble of my performances latterly." It was first published in 1748 in Dodsley's "Collection of Poems by Several Hands."

Following is the significant part of the letter to Walpole:

"CAMBRIDGE, March 1, 1747.

"As one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I know Zara and Selima (Selima was it? or Fatima?), or rather I know them both together; for I cannot just say which was which. Then as to your handsome Cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the survivor; oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. . . .

Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your Cat, fine Mademoiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows:—

[The Ode follows here.]

"There's a poem for you, it is rather too long for an Epitaph."

**1–6. 'Twas on a lofty vase's side,** etc. This stanza was perhaps intended as a burlesque upon the opening lines of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast":

> "'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
> By Philip's warlike son;
> Aloft in awful state
> The godlike hero sate
> On his imperial throne."

The mock-heroic style is used to advantage throughout the poem.

**4. tabby:** a cat whose coat is brindled.

**15. Genii:** spirits.

**16. Tyrian hue:** Tyrian purple, a celebrated purple dye made in ancient Tyre.

**31. Eight times:** a humorous allusion to the old saying that a cat has nine lives.

**34. Dolphin:** a reference to the myth pertaining to Arion, a Greek musician, who having been robbed and thrown into the sea by some sailors, was saved by a dolphin that had been attracted to him by the music of his lyre. **Nereid:** a sea-nymph, who attended Neptune.

**42. Nor all, that glisters, gold.** An old proverb which was a favorite with English writers even before Gray's time.

> "But all thing which that shineth as the gold
> Ne is no gold, as I have herd it told."
> —CHAUCER, "Canon's Yeoman's," ll. 962–963.

> "All that glisters is not gold."
> —SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*, Act. II, vii, 67.

> "All, as they say, that glitters is not gold."
> —DRYDEN, "The Hind and the Panther," Part II, l. 215.

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY

"The Progress of Poesy" was written at Cambridge in 1754, and was published with "The Bard" in 1757. The first edition of the ode contained no notes, but, as many readers found it obscure, Gray added a number to the edition of 1768. They were preceded by the following statement: "Advertisement.—When the Author first published this and the following Ode, he was advised, even by his Friends, to subjoin some explanatory Notes, but had too much respect for the understanding of his Readers to take that liberty."

1. **Awake, Æolian lyre, awake.** Gray, in a footnote, inaccurately quotes *Psalms* lvii. 8:

> "Awake, my glory: awake, lute and harp."

The verse reads, "Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp." **Æolian lyre.** Not the harp of Æolus or wind-harp, as sometimes erroneously interpreted, but rather the "lyre of Pindar."

"Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.

"The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all its touches, are here described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swollen and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions." (Author's note.)

3. **Helicon's harmonious springs:** Hippocrene and Aganippe, fountains sacred to the Muses, which were located on the slopes of Helicon, a mountain range in Bœotia, eastern Greece.

9. **Ceres' golden reign.** Ceres, the Roman goddess of the earth and the protectress of agriculture; known as Demeter by the Greeks.

13. **Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul.** "Power of har-

mony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar." (Author's note.)

**14. solemn-breathing.** This compound is borrowed from Milton:

> "At last a soft and *solemn-breathing* sound
> Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes."
> —"Comus," ll. 555–556.

**15. Enchanting shell:** the first lyre was made from a tortoise shell by Hermes the messenger-god.

**17. Lord of War:** Ares (Greek) or Mars (Roman), the god of war. He was a favorite deity with the people of Thrace, the region north of Greece.

**21. feathered king:** the eagle, sacred to Jove or Zeus.

**25. Thee the voice, the dance, obey.** "Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body." (Author's note.)

**27. Idalia's velvet-green.** Idalia, a town in the island of Cyprus (eastern Mediterranean) sacred to Venus.

**28. Loves:** Cupids.

**29. Cytherea's day.** Cytherea, Venus; so named because it was in the neighborhood of the island of Cythera that she was said to have risen from the foam of the sea.

**37. Graces:** Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, three goddesses, who attended Venus, and sometimes Apollo.

**42. Man's feeble race what ills await.** "To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day by its cheerful presence, to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night." (Author's note.)

**46. fond:** foolish.

**50. birds of boding cry:** the screech-owl.

**53. Hyperion:** one of the Titans, the father of the sun, moon, and stars. The name was sometimes applied to Helios, the son of Hyperion, and god of the sun.

**54–65. In climes beyond the solar road,** etc. "Extensive influence of poetic Genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations: its connection with liberty; and the virtues that naturally attend on it. (See the Erse, Nor-

wegian, and Welsh fragments, the Lapland and American songs.)" (Author's note.)

**66–82. Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,** etc. "Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there. Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them; but this school expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since." (Author's note.)

**66. Delphi's steep:** Delphi, a small town in Phocis, northern Greece, near which was located the celebrated oracle of Apollo.

**67. Ægean:** the ancient Greek name for the Archipelago Sea.

**68. Ilissus:** a river flowing through Athens.

**69. Mæander's amber waves:** Mæander, a river in Asia Minor, proverbial for its windings.

**71. How do your tuneful echoes languish.** The dwelling-place of the nymph Echo was probably suggested to Gray by Milton:

> "Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen,
> Within thy airy shell;
> By slow Mæander's margent green."
> —"Comus," ll. 230–232.

**77. Nine.** See note, l. 16, "Ode on the Spring."

**78. Parnassus:** a range of mountains in northern Greece, celebrated as one of the chief seats of Apollo and the Muses.

**82. Albion:** an ancient name of England.

**84. Nature's Darling:** "Shakespeare." (Author's note.)

**89. pencil:** paint brush.

**95. Nor second He:** "Milton." (Author's note.)

**99. The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze.** "For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. . . . And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone. . . . This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord."—*Ezekiel* i. 20, 26, 28.

**105. Two Coursers of ethereal race.** "Meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes." (Author's note.)

**106. With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.** Gray quotes the following in connection with the first part of this line:

> "Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?"
> —*Job* xxx. 19.

**110. Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.** Gray here quotes from Cowley, but incorrectly:

> "Words, that weep, and tears that speak."

The verse should read:

> "Tears, which shall understand, and speak."
> —"The Prophet," l. 20.

**111. But ah! 'tis heard no more.** "We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's Day; for Cowley (who had his merit) yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony, for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason indeed of late days has touched the true chords, and with a masterly hand, in some of his Choruses,—above all in the last of Caractacus:

> "Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread? etc."
> (Author's note.)

**115. Theban Eagle bear.** "Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamor in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise." (Author's note.)

**121–123. Yet shall he mount,** etc. In these lines Gray characterizes himself, and estimates, in a general way, his own place in the literary world.

**122. vulgar:** common, ordinary.

## THE BARD

"The Bard" was begun in 1754 and finished in 1757, appearing in print shortly after its completion in company

with "The Progress of Poesy." (See introductory note to that poem.)

The original argument which Gray wrote for the ode, but which he discarded, is interesting: "The army of Edward I, as they march through a deep valley, are suddenly stopped by the appearance of a venerable figure seated on the summit of an inaccessible rock, who, with a voice more than human, reproaches the king with all the desolation and misery which he had brought on his country; foretells the misfortunes of the Norman race, and with prophetic spirit declares that all his cruelty shall never extinguish the noble ardor of poetic genius in this island; and that men shall never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valor in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure and boldly censure tyranny and oppression. His song ended, he precipitates himself from the mountain and is swallowed up by the river that rolls at its foot."

**2. Confusion:** destruction, ruin.

**4. They mock the air with idle state.** Gray here quotes the following line from Shakespeare:

> "Mocking the air with colors idly spread."
> —*King John*, Act. V, Sc. I, l. 72.

**5. hauberk's twisted mail:** "The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion." (Author's note.)

**8. Cambria's curse:** Cambria, the ancient Latin name of Wales.

**11. Snowdon's shaggy side:** "Snowdon was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract, which the Welsh themselves call *Craigian-eryri*; it included all the highlands of Cærnarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway. . . ." (Author's note.)

**13. Stout Glo'ster:** "Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward." (Author's note.)

**14. Mortimer:** "Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. They both were *Lords-Marchers*, whose lands lay

on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the king in this expedition." (Author's note.)

19. **Loose his beard, and hoary hair.** "The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. There are two of these paintings (both believed original), one at Florence, the other at Paris." (Author's note.)

20. **Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air.** Gray here quotes from Milton:

> "Shone, like a meteor, streaming to the wind."
> —"Paradise Lost," Bk. I, l. 537.

28. **To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.** Hoel, son of Owen Gwynedd, prince of North Wales, a noted bard and warrior. **Llewellyn:** a French poet and soldier, slain in the wars with King Edward I.

29. **Cadwallo's tongue:** Cadwallo, a Welsh bard; none of his writings have been preserved.

31. **Urien:** also a Welsh bard whose works have been lost.

33. **Modred:** no bard by this name is known to history.

34. **Plinlimmon:** a mountain in Wales.

35. **Arvon's shore they lie:** "The shores of Cærnarvonshire opposite to the isle of Anglesey." (Author's note.)

41. **Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart.** Gray adds this quotation from Shakespeare:

> "As dear to me as are the ruddy drops,
> That visit my sad heart."
> —*Julius Cæsar*, Act II, Sc. I, ll. 289–290.

47. **With me in dreadful harmony they join.** "See the Norwegian Ode (The Fatal Sisters), that follows." (Author's note.)

49–100. **Weave the warp, and weave the woof,** etc. These lines are sung in unison by the bard who has been speaking and the spirits of the dead singers referred to earlier in the ode.

54–56. **When Severn shall reëcho with affright,** etc. "Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley-Castle." (Author's note.) For a thorough understanding of the his-

torical allusions which appear so frequently in the poem, the student should consult an English history.

**57. She-Wolf of France:** "Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous Queen." (Author's note.)

**59–60. Who o'er thy country hangs,** etc. "Triumphs of Edward the Third in France." (Author's note.)

**61. Amazement:** confusion.

**64. Low on his funeral couch he lies:** "Death of that king abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress." (Author's note.)

**67. Is the sable Warrior fled?** "Edward the Black Prince, dead some time before his father." (Author's note.)

**71. Fair laughs the morn.** "Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froissart, and other contemporary writers." (Author's note.)

**77. Fill high the sparkling bowl.** "Richard the Second (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop, and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older Writers) was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon, is of much later date." (Author's note.)

**83. Heard ye the din of battle bray?** "Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster." (Author's note.)

**87. Ye Towers of Julius.** "Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, etc., believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar." (Author's note.)

**89. Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame. consort:** "Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her Husband and her Crown." **father:** "Henry the Fifth." (Author's notes.)

**90. meek usurper's holy head.** "Henry the Sixth very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the Crown." (Author's note.)

**91–92. Above, below, the rose of snow,** etc. "The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster." (Author's note.) The two Houses were united by the marriage of Henry VII of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York.

93. **The bristled Boar:** "The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of *the Boar*." (Author's note.)

99. **Half of thy heart we consecrate.** "Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her Lord is well known. The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her, are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places." (Author's note.)

"The heroic proof of her affection" given by Eleanor, wife of Edward the First, was exhibited on an occasion when the king was wounded with a poisoned dagger; she applied her lips to the wound and sucked the poison from it, thus probably saving his life. Tennyson alludes to the incident:

> "Or her who knew that love can vanquish death,
> Who kneeling with one arm about her king
> Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
> Sweet as in new buds in spring."
> —"A Dream of Fair Women," ll. 268–272.

109. **long-lost Arthur:** "It was the common belief of the Welsh nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy Land, and should return again to reign over Britain." (Author's note.)

110. **ye genuine kings.** "Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor." (Author's note.)

115. **In the midst a form divine:** Queen Elizabeth.

116. **Briton-line:** The Welsh were the original Britons, and in the person of Elizabeth, who was part Welsh, the bard saw his race once more on the English throne.

117. **Her lion-port:** "Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, ambassador of Poland, says: 'And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert Orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartness of her princely cheeks.'" (Author's note.)

121. **great Taliessin:** "Taliessin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the sixth century. His works are still pre-

served, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen." (Author's note.)

128. **buskined.** "Shakespeare." (Author's note.) Tragic. The buskin was a boot worn by the ancient tragedians, hence its implied meaning.

131. **A voice:** "Milton." (Author's note.)

133. **And distant warbling lessen on my ear:** "The succession of Poets after Milton's time." (Author's note.)

## THE FATAL SISTERS

"The Fatal Sisters" was written in 1761, but did not appear in print until 1768, when it came out in the edition of Gray's poems published that year. The ode is a translation or paraphrase of a Norwegian poem entitled "Darradar Liod, or the Lay of Darts," and refers to the battle of Clontarf, fought in 1014 between the Irish under King Brian Borohma and the Danes, aided by the rebels of Leicester.

The poem is introduced by the following preface:

"In the Eleventh Century, Sigurd, Earl of the Orkney-Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of *Sictryg with the silken beard*, who was then making war on his father-in-law *Brian*, king of Dublin; the Earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and *Sictryg* was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of *Brian* their king, who fell in the action. On Christmas Day (the day of the battle), a Native of Caithness in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks, he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women; they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful Song; which, when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped six to the North, and as many to the South."

Gray originally gave his ode the title "The Song of the Valkyries," and in a note preceding the poem, offered the

following explanation of the term: "The Valkyriur were female Divinities, servants of Odin (or Woden), in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies *Chusers of the slain*. They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Valhalla, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the Brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed Heroes with horns of mead and ale."

**3. Iron sleet of arrowy shower.** In connection with this line, Gray quotes from Milton:

> "How quick they wheel'd; and flying, behind them shot
> Sharp sleet of arrowy shower."
> —"Paradise Regained," Bk. III, ll. 323–324.

**4. Hurtles in the darkened air.** Gray here quotes from Shakespeare:

> "The noise of battle hurtled in the air."
> —*Julius Cæsar*, Act. II, Sc. II, l. 22.

**17–18. Mista, black terrific maid,** etc. In the original, the names of the sisters are Hilda, Hiorthrimula, Sangrida, and Svipula.

**37. They, whom once the desert-beach. They:** the Northmen.

**41. dauntless Earl.** Sigurd. (See Preface.)

**44. a King:** Brian (See Preface.)

## THE DESCENT OF ODIN

"The Descent of Odin" was written in 1761, but, like its companion-piece, "The Fatal Sisters," was not published until 1768. The ode is a free translation of an old Norse poem, "Baldrs Draumar" (Balder's Dreams), found in the Elder or Poetic Edda, a collection of verse much of which dates back as far as the tenth century.

The poem is based on the myth that has to do with the death of Balder, the god of light, who was the favorite son of his father Odin. Balder dreamed several times that he was soon to die, and the other gods, anxious to save his

life, exacted an oath from everything that they could think of not to harm him. They, however, overlooked the mistletoe, and it was with a branch of this shrub that he was presently slain. A short time before his death Odin decided to consult a prophetess concerning him, and visited the place of the dead for that purpose. Of her he learned that Balder was to perish at the hand of his brother Hoder, who in turn was to be killed by Vali, the son of Odin and Rinda.

**4. Hela's drear abode:** "Niflheimr, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old-age, or by any other means than in battle. Over it presided HELA (Hel) the Goddess of Death." (Author's note.)

**17. Right against the eastern gate.** See Milton's "L'Allegro," l. 59.

**20. the prophetic Maid:** the prophetess that Odin went to consult. (See introductory note.)

**44. The pure beverage of the bee:** mead, a drink brewed from honey.

**75. What virgins these.** Virgins, the Norns, who were invisible to mortals; their duties were similar to those of the Fates of classical mythology.

**90. Till Lok has burst his tenfold chain.** "Lok (Loki) is the evil Being, who continues in chains till the *Twilight of the Gods* approaches, when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun, shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies; even Odin himself and his kindred-deities shall perish." (Author's note.)

## THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN

"The Triumphs of Owen" was first published in 1768, the exact date of its composition being unknown. It is a paraphrase of a Welsh poem by Gwalchmai, the son of Melir, one of the bards of the twelfth century, who wrote the original in 1157, shortly after Prince Owen Gwynedd defeated the combined fleets of Ireland, Denmark, and Norway which had invaded his country. Gray found Gwalch-

mai's composition in Evans's "Specimens of the Welsh Poetry," which appeared in 1764.

The ode was introduced with the following: "Advertisement.—Owen succeeded his Father Griffin in the Principality of North-Wales, A.D. 1120. This battle was fought nearly forty years afterwards."

3. **Roderic's stem:** Owen Gwynedd was a descendant of Roderic the Great, a king who ruled Wales in the tenth century.

4. **Gwyneth's shield. Gwyneth:** "North-Wales." (Author's note.)

10. **Squadrons three.** See introductory note.

11. **Eirin:** Ireland.

14. **Lochlin:** "Denmark." (Author's note.) Note how in the preceding lines the Danish fleet screens the Irish ships and sails on the shadow it casts in the water.

15. **Norman:** Norwegian.

20. **The Dragon-Son of Mona stands.** "The red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners." (Author's note.) Cadwallader, Owen. **Mona:** Anglesea, northern Wales.

25. **Talymalfra's rocky shore. Talymalfra:** a small bay on the northeastern coast of Anglesea; the scene of the battle.

26. **Echoing to the battle's roar.** According to Mason, Gray originally included the following lines after this verse:

> "Checked by the torrent-tide of blood,
> Backward Meinai rolls his flood;
> While, heaped his master's feet around,
> Prostrate warriors gnaw the ground."

## THE DEATH OF HOEL

"The Death of Hoel" was probably written in 1764 and first appeared in print in 1775. It is a free translation of a fragment of the Welsh poem, "Gododin," by Aneurin, a bard of the sixth century. Gray found Aneurin's composition in Evans's "Specimens of the Welsh Poetry," the same source from which he drew "The Triumphs of Owen."

"Gododin" is a heroic poem celebrating the battle of Cattraeth in which Aneurin and a number of his companions took an active part. The bard and two others were all that escaped death, Conan being one of them. (See next poem.)

**Deïra's squadrons. Deïra:** Yorkshire, in northern England.

**11. Cattraeth's vale.** Near Richmond, Yorkshire.

**14. Chains of regal honor deck:** The Celtic nobility wore gold collars to designate their rank.

## CONAN

"Conan," like "The Death of Hoel," was probably written in 1764 and first appeared in print in 1775. It also is a free translation of a fragment of "Gododin." (See introductory note to "The Death of Hoel.")

**2. Build to him the lofty verse.** Here once more Gray borrowed from Milton:

> "He knew
> Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme."
> —"Lycidas," ll. 10–11.

## SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER

Gray wrote this sketch of his own character in 1761, and put it in one of his pocket-books, where it was found later.

**6. But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire. Charles Townshend:** Chancellor of the Exchequer (1767). **Squire:** Dr. Samuel; Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and later Bishop of St. David's.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

This poem was sent in a letter to the Rev. William Mason, Precentor of York, on July 16, 1765; it was first published in 1853.

**1. Mistress Anne:** Mason's servant at York.

**3. a right proper man:** a living being in contrast to "now a book."

**5–7. Much have I borne from cankered critic's spite,** etc.: A reference to the many criticisms on and editions of Shakespeare's works which were being published at the time Gray wrote these stanzas.

**12. By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes. residence:** Mason was not satisfied with his residence at York Cathedral. **marriage:** Mason was to be married soon. **sore eyes:** Mason was afflicted with weak eyes.

**21. Clouet:** a celebrated cook.

## SONG

Gray wrote this song in 1761 "to an old air of Geminiani." It was composed at the request of Miss Speed, a friend of Gray, and the heroine of "A Long Story."

**1. Thyrsis:** a name frequently applied in verse to a rustic lover.

## A LONG STORY

"A Long Story" was written in the summer of 1750, and was first published in 1753 in the edition of Gray's verse entitled "Six Poems." It was composed in a spirit of fun in celebration of a visit made Gray by two ladies, Lady Schaub and Miss Harriet Speed, the latter of whom became a close friend of the poet.

**2. An ancient pile:** the mansion of Sir Edward Coke at Stoke-Poges, occupied by Lady Cobham at the time Gray wrote "A Long Story."

**11. My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls. Lord-Keeper:** "Hatton preferred by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing." (Author's note.) **brawls:** a kind of dance resembling a cotillon.

**16. Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it. Pope:** a reference to the controversies between Pius V and Queen Elizabeth. **Spaniard:** Gray had in mind the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which occurred in 1588.

23. **A brace of warriors:** Lady Schaub and Miss Speed. (See introductory note.)

25. **The first came cap-a-pie from France:** Lady Schaub, dressed from head to foot in French style.

29. **The other Amazon:** Miss Speed.

31. **Cobham:** Lady Schaub and Miss Speed were staying with Lady Cobham. (See note, l. 2, above.)

35. **Melissa is her "nom de guerre." Melissa:** a kindly disposed fairy mentioned in Italian literature. **nom de guerre:** literally, a war-name.

37. **Capucine:** "A garment for women, consisting of a cloak and hood, resembling, or supposed to resemble, that of *capuchin,* monks." (Johnson.)

41. **Mr. P—t:** Mr. Purt, a neighbor of Gray.

51. **high commission:** a reference to the edict issued by Henry the Fourth against the Welsh bards.

80. **a spell:** Gray was not at home when the ladies called, so they left a note on his table.

99. **The lady Janes and Joans repair:** a humorous allusion to the belief that the spirits of the great ladies whose portraits hung on the walls sometimes walked.

103. **Styack:** "The House-keeper." (Author's note.)

115. **Squib:** "Groom of the Chambers." (Author's note.)

116. **Groom:** "The Steward." (Author's note.)

120. **Macleane:** "A famous highwayman hanged the week before." (Author's note.)

129. **ghostly prudes:** the spirits of the ladies in the portraits.

135. **square-hoods:** the ladies in the portraits; pictured as wearing peaked hoods.

144. **rubbers:** the odd game at cards when the players have won an equal number.

## ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE

The "Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude," which Gray left unfinished, was probably written in 1754–1755, but was not published until 1775 four years after

the poet's death. Mason, who was given charge of his literary effects, found the following outline among his papers: "Contrast between the winter past and coming spring.—Joy owing to that vicissitude.—Many who never feel that delight.—Sloth.—Envy.—Ambition. How much happier the rustic who feels it, tho' he knows not how."

## THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT

"The Alliance of Education and Government" was first published in 1775, the exact date of its composition being unknown. Gray never finished it, although his friends urged him to do so. Mason wrote the following commentary for it, the material for which he discovered among the poet's papers. (See introductory note to the "Ode on the Pleasure Arising from Vicissitude.")

### COMMENTARY

"The author's subject being *The necessary Alliance between a good Form of Government and a good Mode of Education, in order to produce the Happiness of Mankind*, the Poem opens with two similes; an uncommon kind of exordium; but which I suppose the poet intentionally chose, to intimate the analogical method he meant to pursue in his subsequent reasonings.

"1st. He asserts that men without education are like sickly plants in a cold or barren soil (l. 1 to 5, and 8 to 12); and 2dly, he compares them, when unblest with a just and well-regulated government, to plants that will not blossom or bear fruit in an unkindly and inclement air (l. 5 to 9, and 13 to 22). Having thus laid down the two propositions he means to prove, he begins by examining into the characteristics which (taking a general view of mankind) all men have in common one with another (l. 22 to 39); they covet pleasure and avoid pain (l. 31); they feel gratitude for benefits (l. 34); they desire to avenge wrongs, which they effect either by force or cunning (l. 35); they are linked to each other by their

common feelings, and participate in sorrow and in joy (l. 36, 37).

"If then all the human species agree in so many moral particulars, whence arises the diversity of national characters? This question the poet puts at l. 38, and dilates upon to l. 64. Why, says he, have some nations shown a propensity to commerce and industry; others to war and rapine; others to ease and pleasure? (l. 42 to 46). Why have the northern people overspread, in all ages, and prevailed over the southern? (l. 46 to 58). Why has Asia been, time out of mind, the seat of despotism, and Europe that of freedom? (l. 59 to 64). Are we from these instances to imagine men necessarily enslaved to the inconveniences of the climate where they were born? (l. 64 to 72). Or are we not rather to suppose there is a natural strength in the human mind, that is able to vanquish and break through them? (l. 72 to 84).

"It is confessed, however, that men receive an early tincture from the situation they are placed in, and the climate which produces them (l. 84 to 88). Thus the inhabitants of the mountains, inured to labor and patience, are naturally trained to war (l. 88 to 96); while those of the plain are more open to any attack, and softened by ease and plenty (l. 96 to 99). Again, the Egyptians, from the nature of their situation, might be the inventors of home navigation, from a necessity of keeping up an intercourse between their towns during the inundation of the Nile (l. 99, etc.).

"Those persons would naturally have the first turn to commerce who inhabited a barren coast like the Tyrians, and were persecuted by some neighboring tyrant; or were driven to take refuge on some shoals, like the Venetian and Hollander; their discovery of some rich island in the infancy of the world, described. The Tartar, hardened to war by his rigorous climate and pastoral life, and by his disputes for water and herbage in a country without landmarks, as also by skirmishes between his rival clans, was consequently fitted to conquer his rich southern neighbors, whom ease and luxury had enervated. Yet this is no proof that liberty and valor may not exist in southern climes,

since the Syrians and Carthaginians gave noble instances of both; and the Arabians carried their conquests as far as the Tartars. Rome also (for many centuries) repulsed those very nations which, when she grew weak, at length demolished her extensive empire."

47. **Scythia**: a name formerly given to northern Asia and northeastern Europe.

51. **The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast**: the Germanic people who eventually overthrew Rome.

77. **O'er Libya's deserts and through Zembla's snows. Libya**: an ancient name given the northern part of Africa west of Egypt. **Zembla**: an island in the Arctic Ocean north of Russia; commonly called *Nova Zembla*.

## ODE FOR MUSIC

The "Ode for Music" was written and published in 1769, the occasion for its writing being the installation of the Duke of Grafton as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge that year. Gray was under obligation to the Duke, for it was through him that he was appointed to the Professorship of Modern History of Cambridge, and he sought to express his appreciation by writing the customary installation ode. It was Gray's last poem.

2. **Comus, and his midnight-crew.** A reference to Milton's "Comus." Comus, like his mother Circe, was an enchanter who sullied the characters of those who fell under his influence.

25. **Meek Newton's self**: Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the philosopher, who was a resident at Trinity College, Cambridge, for thirty-five years.

29. **Camus**: the river Cam, which flows through Cambridge, is a favorite resort with the university students. See note, l. 9, "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College."

32. **Cynthia**: Diana, the goddess of the chase; she was born on Mount Synthus on the island of Delos; hence the name *Cynthia*.

37–66. **High potentates, and dames of royal birth,** etc. The persons referred to in these lines aided materially in the development of the University of Cambridge.

39. **Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow:** Edward the Third, who added the *fleur-de-lys* of France to the English coat-of-arms.

41. **sad Chatillon:** "Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Comte de St. Paul in France; of whom tradition says, that her husband Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials." (Author's note.)

42. **princely Clare:** Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, granddaughter of Edward the First.

43. **And Anjou's heroine, and the paler Rose. Anjou's heroine:** Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth. (See note, l. 89, "The Bard.") **Paler Rose:** Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward the Fourth; her husband belonged to the House of York, of which the white rose was the insignia. (See note, ll. 91-92, "The Bard.")

45. **either Henry:** Henry the Sixth and Henry the Eighth.

46–47. **The murdered saint, and the majestic lord, etc. The murdered saint:** Henry the Sixth. (See notes, l. 4, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," and l. 87, "The Bard.") **The majestic lord,** etc.: Henry the Eighth who severed the connection between the Pope and the English church.

51. **Granta's fruitful plain.** The river Cam was also known as the Granta. (See note, l. 29 above.)

54. **Fitzroy's festal morning.** The family name of the Duke of Grafton was Fitzroy. (See introductory note.)

66. **venerable Margaret:** Lady Margaret Beaufort, wife of Edmund Tudor, and mother of Henry the Seventh.

67. **my noble son:** The Duke of Grafton was a descendant of Edmund Tudor and Lady Beaufort through Henry the Seventh.

84. **Cecil:** William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Lord Treasurer under Elizabeth, was made Chancellor of the University of Cambridge in 1558.

86. **fasces:** insignia of authority. See an unabridged dictionary.

93. **Star of Brunswick:** Brunswick, the reigning House

of England; usually known as the House of Hanover. It came into power in 1713 with George the First.

## NOTES ON COWPER'S POEMS

### THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

"The Diverting History of John Gilpin" was written in October, 1782, and was published in the *Public Advertiser* in November of the same year. It became popular at once, and to-day is ranked as one of the greatest humorous poems in the English language.

Southey in his life of the author, tells the following story of its origin: "Lady Austen's conversation had as happy an effect upon the melancholy spirit of Cowper as the harp of David upon Saul. Whenever the cloud seemed to be coming over him, her sprightly powers were exerted to dispel it. One afternoon, when he appeared more than usually depressed, she told him the story of John Gilpin, which had been told to her in her childhood, and which, in her relation, tickled his fancy as much as it has that of thousands and tens of thousands since, in his. The next morning he said to her that he had been kept awake during the greater part of the night by thinking of the story and laughing at it, and that he had turned it into a ballad."

The original John Gilpin is said to have been a Mr. Beyer, a linen-draper who kept a shop at the corner of Paternoster Row and Cheapside.

3. **train-band captain:** captain of citizen soldiers or militia.

11. **Edmonton:** a village a few miles north of London.

23. **calender:** A person who presses and smooths out cloth in a machine.

39. **agog:** eager.

44. **Cheapside:** one of the main streets of London; it extends through the central part of the city from east to west.

52. **Three customers come in.** It was formerly the

custom in London for a shop-keeper to live over his place of business.

**61. Good lack:** an archaic expression implying surprise.

**64. Exercise:** take part in military drill.

**92. eke:** also.

**100. running such a rig:** taking such a frolic.

**133. Islington:** a borough in the northern part of London.

**135. Wash:** a shallow part of a river. Edmonton is located on a branch of the river Lea.

**152. Ware:** a town twenty-one miles north of London.

**178. in merry pin:** in merry humor. The expression was derived from the custom of drinking from mugs with pins fixed in them, to regulate the quantity to be drunk.

**236. the hue and cry:** the pursuit of a criminal with loud outcries to give an alarm.

## THE ROSE

"The Rose" was written in 1783, and was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1785. It has been suggested that it was intended as a criticism on Newton's attitude toward the poet. See *Globe* edition of *Cowper*, p. 524.

## ODE TO APOLLO

The date of the composition of the "Ode to Apollo" is uncertain; it first appeared in print in the 1794 edition of Cowper's poems.

Apollo was the sun-god, and also presided over the Muses.

**19. Iris:** rainbow. In classical mythology, Iris was the personification of the rainbow.

**25. Phœbus:** one of the names by which Apollo was known; it signifies light and life.

## THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY

"The Dog and the Water-Lily" was probably written in 1788, for in a letter to Lady Hesketh dated June 27 of

that year, the poet tells of the incident. "I must tell you a feat of my dog Beau. Walking by the riverside, I observed some water-lilies floating at a little distance from the bank. They are a large white flower, with an orange-colored eye, very beautiful. I had a desire to gather one, and having your long cane in my hand, by the help of it endeavored to bring one of them within my reach. But the attempt proved vain, and I walked forward. Beau had all the while observed me attentively. Returning soon after toward the same place, I observed him plunging into the river, while I was about forty yards distant from him; and when I had nearly reached the spot he swam to land with a lily in his mouth, which he came and laid at my feet."

2. **Ouse's silent tide:** Ouse, a river in eastern England which flows into the Wash, an arm of the North Sea.

7. **Two nymphs:** "Sir Robert Gunning's daughters." (Author's note.)

## THE SHRUBBERY

"The Shrubbery" was written in 1773. The grove referred to was at Weston. (See Introduction.)

## THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM

"The Nightingale and Glow-Worm" was written in 1780. In a letter forwarding the manuscript of the poem to Unwin, Cowper wrote: "I only premise that in the philosophical tract in the *Register*, I found it asserted that the glowworm is the nightingale's food."

27. **jarring sectaries:** persons over-zealous concerning sects or denominations.

## VERSES—SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK

"Verses—Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk" was written in 1782. William Benham in his edition of Cowper's poems gives the following account of Selkirk:

"He was born in 1676, quarrelled with his family and went to sea, and his adventures on the island of Juan Fernandez (off the coast of Chili) are said to have furnished the materials for De Foe's great fiction. . . . After his return home, he pined for his island again, and would see no one, only going out of doors after dark. After staying nine months at home, he went away again, and was never more heard of."

## ODE TO PEACE

The "Ode to Peace" was written in 1773, just before Cowper had his second attack of insanity.

## THE MODERN PATRIOT

"The Modern Patriot" was written in 1780, and was intended for a description of Edmund Burke, whose attitude toward the American colonies and the Roman Catholics had displeased the poet. Cowper afterwards admitted that his criticism was unjust.

## REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE

The "Report of an Adjudged Case" was written in 1780, and the manuscript sent in letters to Unwin and Hill, friends of Cowper. To Hill he wrote: "I have heard of common law judgments before now, indeed have been present at the delivery of some that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of a statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it; and being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common sense behind them at an infinite distance. You will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion."

## THE LILY AND THE ROSE

"The Lily and the Rose" was probably written in 1780.

**15. Flora's hand. Flora:** goddess of flowers and gardens.

20. **parterre:** "An ornamental and diversified arrangement of beds or plots, in which flowers are cultivated, with intervening spaces of gravel or turf for walking on." (Webster's Dictionary.)

28. **They reign united there:** The English coat-of-arms contains both the lily and the rose.

## THE POPLAR FIELD

"The Poplar Field" was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1785. In a letter to Lady Hesketh dated May 1, 1786, Cowper gives the following account of its origin: "There was some time since, in a neighboring parish called Lavendon, a field one side of which formed a terrace, and the other was planted with poplars, at whose foot ran the Ouse, that I used to account a little paradise. But the poplars have been felled, and the scene has suffered so much by the loss that, though still in point of prospect beautiful, it has not charms sufficient to attract me now."

4. **Ouse.** See note on l. 2, "The Dog and the Water-Lily."

17–20. **'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,** etc. Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:

> "The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
> I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;
> Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
> Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we."

## ON RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

"On Receipt of My Mother's Picture" was written early in 1790. Cowper, in writing to Lady Hesketh on February 26, 1790, said: "I am delighted with Mrs. Bodham's kindness in giving me the only picture of my own mother that is to be found, I suppose, in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection that her death, fifty-two years

since, has not in the least abated. I remember her, too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable."

He also wrote to Mrs. Bodham: "I received it (the picture) the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it and hung it where it is the last object I see at night, and of course the first on which I open my eyes in the morning."

**14. a mother lost so long:** Cowper's mother died when he was but six years of age.

**19. Elysian:** yielding the highest pleasures. The word is derived from Elysium, the name given by the early Greeks to the dwelling-place of happy souls after death.

**45. ne'er forgot.** Cowper, in writing to his friend Hill in November, 1784, said: "I can truly say that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her."

**53. the pastoral house:** the rectory at Great Berkhampstead, where Cowper was born.

**88. Albion's coast:** Albion, an ancient name of England.

**97. "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar."** Quoted from Garth's "The Dispensary," Canto III.

**98. And thy loved consort:** Cowper's father died July 9, 1756.

**108–109. My boast is not, that I deduce my birth,** etc. Cowper sprang from an ancestry of gentle blood. (See biographical sketch in Introduction.)

## THE NEEDLESS ALARM

"The Needless Alarm" was written in 1788.

**3. Kilwick's echoing wood.** A short distance west of Olney.

**106. Cambrian Ewe.** Cambria, the name by which Wales was known to the Romans.

## BOADICEA

"Boadicea" was written in 1780 after Cowper had finished reading Hume's "History of England."

Boadicea was the wife of Prasutagus, king of one of the tribes in eastern Britain. Her husband having died in 60 A.D., she fell into the hands of the Romans, who robbed her of her wealth and reduced her to the standing of a slave. In 62 she led a revolt against her oppressors, and is said to have perished on the field of battle.

**20. the Gaul is at her gates:** Rome fought many wars against the Gauls and Goths, and was several times besieged by them.

## EPITAPH ON A HARE

The "Epitaph on a Hare" was written in 1783. The following account of the treatment of his pets was inserted by Cowper in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1784:

"In the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbor of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbors that I was pleased with the present; and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the

names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived, that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthern pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired, each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

"Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him, (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick,) and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening: in the leaves also of that vine he found a favorite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be per-

fectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

"Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He, too, was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if after his recovery I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was, however, very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth; and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him, too, I had an agreeable companion.

"Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humor and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all: and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlor after supper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat, being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence, that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

* * * * *

"Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without ob-

serving, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance—a spaniel that had never seen a hare, to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hositilty. There is, therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

"I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them; that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784."

*Memorandum found among Mr. Cowper's papers*

"Tuesday, March, 9, 1786.

"This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain."

## ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

"On the Loss of the Royal George" was written in September, 1782. On August 29 of that year the *Royal George*, an English man-of-war, which had just returned from service in the American Revolution, was being refitted at Spithead, when she suddenly heeled over and sank. Admiral Kempenfelt and about eight hundred sailors, marines, and visitors were drowned.

## SONG ON PEACE

The "Song on Peace" was written in 1783, at the request of Lady Austen, who suggested the sentiment.

## ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

"On the Shortness of Human Life" was written in 1784.

## EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON

The "Epitaph on Dr. Johnson" was written in January, 1785. Samuel Johnson, the celebrated lexicographer, essayist, and poet, died on December, 13, 1784.

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS

"The Judgment of the Poets" was written in 1791.

**1. Two nymphs.** May and June. The former month in 1791 was unusually inclement. Cowper, in speaking of it in a letter to his friend Johnson, said: "Oh! what a month of May this has been! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praises of May again."

## YARDLEY OAK

"Yardley Oak" was written in 1791. The tree, to which the poem is addressed, was said by Cowper to be twenty-two feet, six and one-half inches in girth; it was situated three miles from Weston. In a letter to Lady Hesketh dated September 13, 1788, the poet spoke of it in this way: "I walked with him (Mr. Gifford) yesterday on a visit to an oak on the border of Yardley Chase, an oak which I often visit, and which is one of the wonders that I show to all who come this way and have never seen it. I tell them it is a thousand years old, believing it to be so, though I do not know it." The oak is said to have been planted by Judith, daughter of William the Conqueror.

**10. our forefather Druids in their oaks:** the religious services conducted by the Druids were held in oak groves.

**35. Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins.** According to one myth, Castor and Pollux, twin sons of Jupiter and Leda, were born at the same time with Helena, their sister, out of an egg.

**41. As in Dodona.** The oracle of Zeus was situated in an oak grove at Dodona in Epirus, northwestern Greece.

**96. some flagged admiral:** admiral's flagship.

**99. tough knee-timber:** "Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet." (Author's note.)

**161. supply her with a theme.** The poem was never finished.

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE

"To the Nightingale" was written in 1792.

**16. Of happier days at hand.** Cowper's hope, as expressed here, was not realized, for he said later that the year 1792 was the saddest he had yet known.

## TO MARY

"To Mary" was written in 1793. The poem is addressed to Mrs. Unwin, with whom Cowper was so long associated. In December, 1791, she suffered a paralytic stroke from which she never fully recovered. Her death occurred in December, 1796.

**1. The twentieth year is well-nigh past.** A reference to Cowper's attack of insanity in 1773. (See Introduction, page xviii.)

**9. Thy needles, once a shining store.** Lady Hesketh, in a letter to Theodora Cowper, dated June, 1786, wrote: "Her (Mrs. Unwin) constant employment is knitting stockings, which she does with the finest needles I ever saw. . . . She sits knitting on one side of the table, in her spectacles, and he (Cowper) on the other, reading to her (when he is not employed in writing) in his."

## THE CASTAWAY

"The Castaway," the last poem that Cowper produced, was written in March, 1799. It is based on an incident found in *Anson's Voyages*, which the poet had read several months before.

## THE TASK

### THE WINTER EVENING (BOOK IV)

"The Task," the longest, and, in many respects, the greatest of Cowper's poems, was written in 1783–1784. In the advertisement to the first edition of the work, the author accounted for its origin in this way: "The history of the following production, is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth, at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume!"

The lady referred to was Lady Austen. She was an ardent admirer of blank verse, and time and again urged Cowper to attempt its use. At first he declined, but finally promised to grant her request if she would furnish the subject. "O!" she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject; you can write upon any: write upon this sofa!"

"The poet," says Mr. Hayley, "obeyed her command, and from the lively repartee of familiar conversation arose a poem of many thousand verses, unexampled perhaps both in its origin and excellence. A poem of such infinite variety, that it seems to include every subject, and every style, without any dissonance or disorder; and to have flowed without effort, from inspired philanthropy, eager to impress upon the hearts of all readers whatever may lead them most happily to the full enjoyment of human life, and to the final attainment of heaven."

The poem is divided into six books: *The Sofa*, *The Time-Piece*, *The Garden*, *The Winter Evening*, *The Winter Morning Walk*, and *The Winter Walk at Noon*.

1. **O'er yonder bridge:** the bridge extending across the valley between Olney and Emberton, which could be seen from Cowper's window.

25. **have our troops awaked?** a reference to the English troops in America.

28. **Is India free?** In a letter to Newton dated January 25, 1784, Cowper wrote: "To speak here figuratively, I would abandon all territorial interest in a country to which we can have no right, and which we cannot govern with any security to the happiness of the inhabitants, or without the danger of incurring either perpetual broils, or the most insupportable tyranny at home."

49. **placemen:** incumbents of political offices. The term is usually contemptuous.

50. **This folio:** the newspaper.

86. **Katerfelto:** a mountebank who used to exhibit in London in company with a black cat, and headed his advertisements with the words, "Wonders! Wonders!"

114. **He travels, and I too.** Cowper was very fond of books of travel.

162. **the clear voice.** Lady Austen frequently sang, accompanying herself on the harpsichord.

189. **O evenings worthy of the gods!** Quoted from Horace:

> "O noctes coenaeque Deum."
> —*Satires*, Bk. II, l. 66.

190. **The Sabine bard:** Horace was so designated because he spent much of his time on his "Sabine farm," about thirty miles east of Rome.

363. **the unhealthful east:** the east wind, which, in classic mythology, was unvariably associated with storms, and which is supposed to be harmful to the health.

427. **I mean the man.** The reference is to Robert Smith, the first Lord Carrington. In a letter to Unwin dated October 10, 1784, Cowper wrote: "How I love and honor that man! For many reasons I dare not tell him how much. My bosom burns to immortalize him. . . . He sent forty pounds, twenty at a time. Olney has not had such a friend this many a day."

437. **Plashed:** with the branches half broken, and then interwoven with others.

473. **Indian fume:** tobacco was introduced into England by Sir Walter Raleigh, who found it in use among the American Indians.

**475. Lethean leave:** Lethe, one of the rivers of the lower world of which the souls of the departed were obliged to drink to make them forget the past.

**507. Midas finger:** Midas, a king of Phrygia, Asia Minor, who was given the "golden touch."

**515. Arcadian scenes that Maro sings:** scenes of perfect joy and contentment which Virgil sings of in his "Eclogues."

**516. And Sidney.** Similar scenes dealt with by Sir Philip Sidney in his "Arcadia."

**517. Dianas:** Diana, the goddess of the chase.

**533. tramontane:** Literally, beyond the mountain; hence, barbarous.

**627. Is balloted:** drafted.

**642. meal and larded locks:** a reference to the use of hairdressing at one time common in the English army. It was forbidden by a general order in 1799.

**676–683. Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin,** etc. Cowper is referring to the East India Company, whose unfair treatment of the natives of India appealed strongly to his sense of justice.

**707. Tityrus:** the shepherd boy in Virgil's first "Eclogue."

**723. Ingenious Cowley:** Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), an English author best known for his Pindaric Odes and essays.

**728. Chertsey's silent bowers:** Cowley's estate at Chertsey, a few miles southwest of London.

**757. grace the well:** that is, the garden hemmed in by walls.

**765. The Frenchman's darling:** "Mignonette." (Author's note.)

## THE WINTER MORNING WALK (BOOK V)

**22. bents:** stiff, wiry grasses.

**46. lurcher:** a mongrel breed of dog, much used by poachers.

**102. The mill-dam:** a reference to the Lavendon mill, about two miles from Olney.

**131. The wonder of the North:** the ice palace of St. Petersburg, built in 1740 by the Empress Anna. It was constructed of large blocks of ice cut from the Neva River, and lasted from January to March.

**135–137. In such a palace Aristæus found,** etc. The story is found in Virgil's "Georgics," Bk. IV. Aristæus was the son of Apollo and Cyrené, a sea-nymph. Having been robbed of his bees, of which he was very fond, by some nymphs, he complained to his mother, whom he found in her home beneath the waves.

**178. At hewing mountains into men.** Probably an allusion to an offer made by Dinocrates, a Macedonian sculptor, to hew Mount Athos into a statue of Alexander the Great.

**179. At building human wonders mountain high:** the Pyramids of Egypt.

**193. When Babel was confounded.** See *Genesis* xi. 1–9.

**213. The first artificer of death:** "And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron."—*Genesis* iv. 22.

**217. Vulcan:** the god of fire and the smithy. It was he that provided Jupiter with thunderbolts.

**266. fume him so:** burn incense to him.

**282. Storks among frogs.** See Æsop's Fable, "The Frogs desiring a King."

**322. Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees.** See *Judges* ix. 7–15.

**378. The surest presage of the good they seek.** "The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware, that it is become almost fashionable, to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times." (Author's note.)

**383. the Bastile:** the famous Parisian prison which was destroyed on July 14, 1789, by the French revolutionists.

**401. By him of Babylon:** Nebuchadnezzar. See *Daniel* iv. 10–18.

**418. To read engraven on the mouldy walls:** the

walls of the Tower of London are half covered with inscriptions placed there by prisoners.

444. **Manichean God:** Manes, the founder of the Manicheans, taught that there were two gods of equal power, the one good, the other evil; and that the world was created by the latter.

486. **For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled.** John **Hampden** (1594–1643), a celebrated English statesman, who refused in 1636 to pay the ship-money levied by King Charles the First, and joined the Parliamentary forces in their uprising a short time afterward. He was mortally wounded at the battle of Chalgrove Field near Oxford. Algernon **Sidney** (1621–1683) was also a member of the Parliamentary forces. On the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne, he was charged with complicity in the Rye House Plot, and executed.

585. **propense:** inclined.

694. **Orpheus:** the son of Apollo and the Muse Calliope; famed for his skill upon the lute.

707. **The historic Muse:** Clio, the Muse of history.

732. **But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.** Cowper, in a note, informs us that he had Hume in mind.

737. **as Samson his green withes.** See *Judges* xvi. 7–10.

818–822. **inquires what strains were they,** etc. See *Job* xxxviii. 7.

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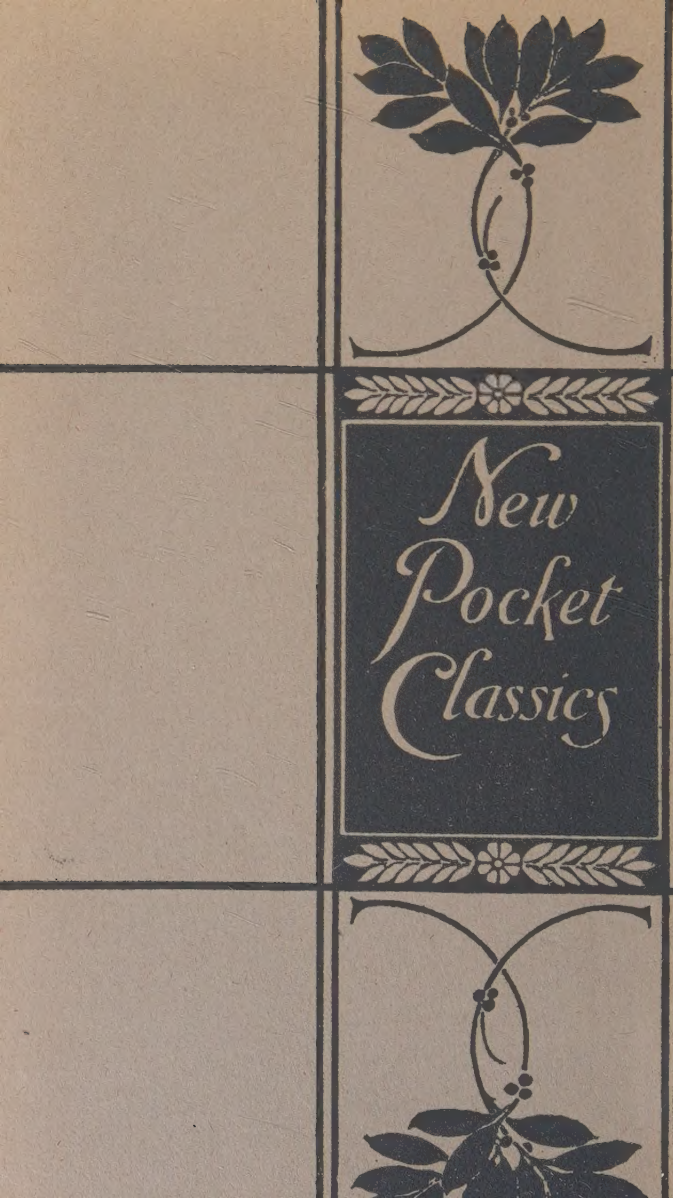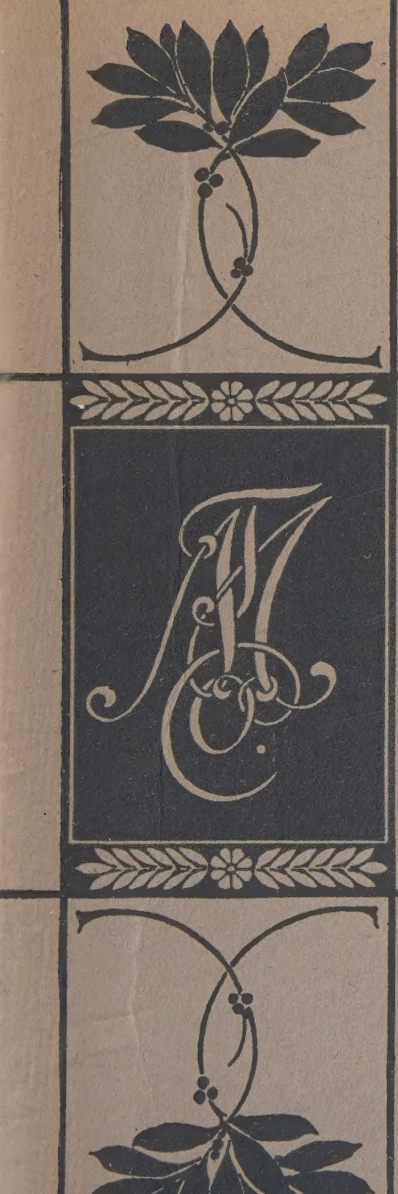
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